TIM O'BRIEN COMES HOME P. 14 • CYBER HOUSE RULES P. 100

Smithsonian

NOVEMBER 2009

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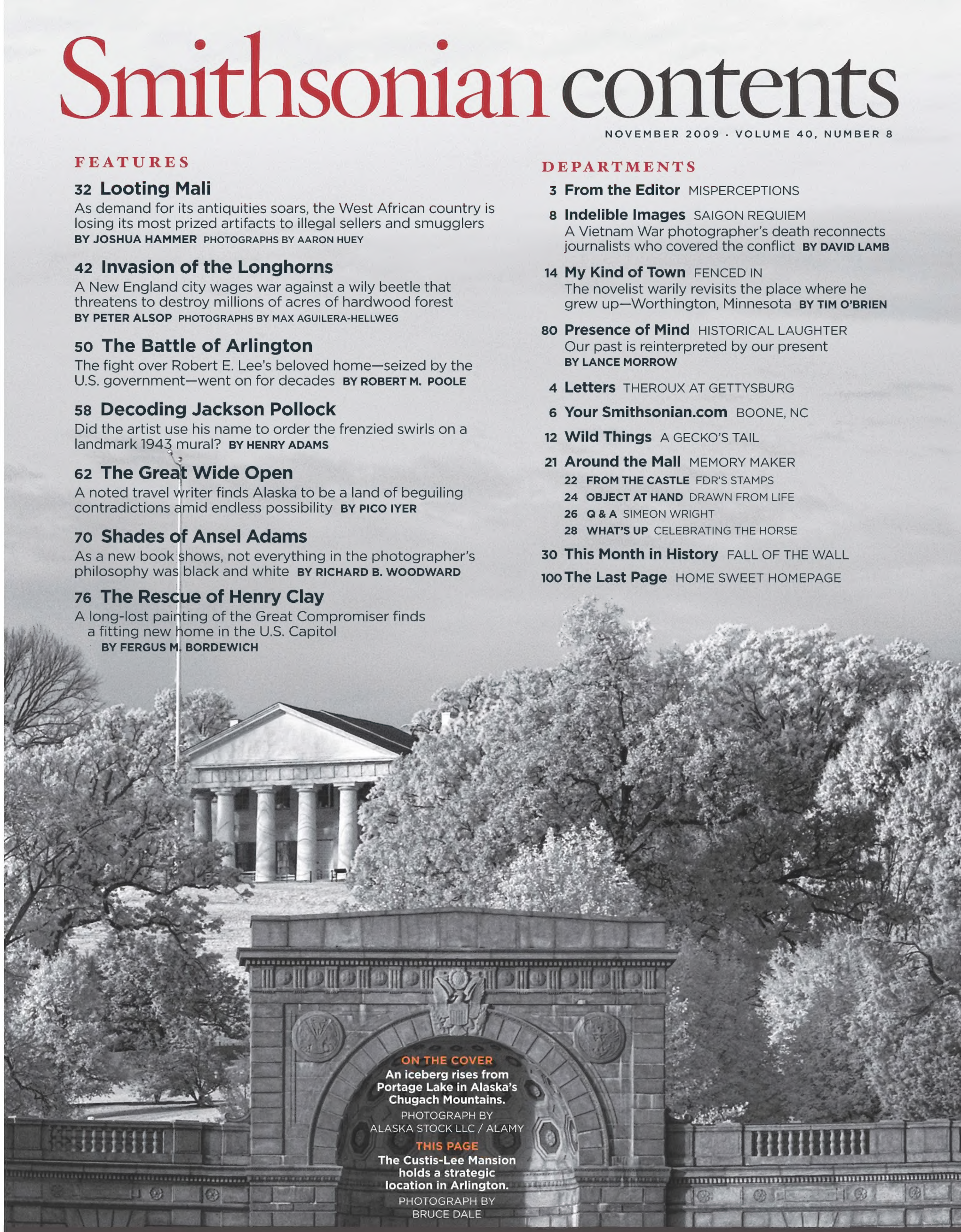

ON THE COVER
An iceberg rises from Portage Lake in Alaska's Chugach Mountains.
PHOTOGRAPH BY ALASKA STOCK LLC / ALAMY

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The Custis-Lee Mansion holds a strategic location in Arlington.
PHOTOGRAPH BY BRUCE DALE

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My goodness, I was handsome in 2008!

2009

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FROM THE EDITOR

Misperceptions

Closing In on 40 years

BY CAREY WINFREY

OUR TITLE IS OUR GREATEST ASSET. Affiliating us with our parent organization—one dedicated, in the words of founder James Smithson, to "the increase and diffusion of knowledge"—SMITHSONIAN confers authority, integrity, responsibility and trust. In a time that has seen the deaths of too many fine magazines, our affiliation with the Smithsonian Institution underlies our continuing good health. Not a day goes by that I'm not grateful for it.

But our title may create misperceptions. Some people—nonreaders, I like to think—assume we're a mouthpiece for the Institution. Not so. We are *of* the Institution, not *about* it. We choose our stories—and how we execute them—on their journalistic merits. That's true even for "Around the Mall," about Institutional goings-on; before selecting a story for that department we ask ourselves if another Washington-based culture magazine would cover it. Another misperception is that we're subsidized by the Institution. Also untrue. In fact, we have contributed hundreds of millions of dollars to Institution coffers over our nearly four decades of publication.

***Of* the Institution, not *about* it**

Some people seem surprised by our hefty circulation: two million. "But," I hear them say, "the magazine comes with membership to the Institution." This is true. But the main reason that members give for joining the Institution is to get the magazine.

Where we do reflect the Institution is in our shared interests. Like our curious parent, we are fascinated by history, natural history, science, art, archaeology and world cultures. A successful issue of the magazine, like this one, mixes those interests in pleasing proportions: Joshua Hammer's investigation into the illegal trade of historic artifacts from Mali; Robert M. Poole's history of the origins of Arlington National Cemetery; Peter Alsop's warning of a potentially devastating invasion of beetles in New England; Henry Adams' probe into a possible hidden message in a Jackson Pollock masterpiece; Pico Iyer's wry report on a visit to Alaska; Fergus M. Bordewich's account of the restoration of a portrait of Henry Clay to the U.S. Capitol; and Richard B. Woodward's critique of Ansel Adams' color photography. A good mix.

The story of our founding, which I've told here before, bears repeating: when then-Smithsonian Secretary S. Dillon Ripley discussed the magazine with founding editor Edward K. Thompson, Ripley suggested it should be "about whatever the Institution was interested in—or *might be* interested in." Thompson added: "And *should* be?" Happily for all, Ripley agreed.

ALEXIS PELTIER

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DOUG GRITZMACHER

LETTERS READERS RESPOND TO THE **SEPTEMBER** ISSUE

I agree with Paul Theroux's statement ["The Long Way Home"] about visiting Gettysburg: "No history book can equal the experience of walking those battlefields." This was true for me when I saw my great-great-great-uncle's name, Abner Doubleday, on a marker where the Union Army held off Pickett's Charge.

ROBERTA O'CONNELL, PIONEER, CALIFORNIA

TRAVEL LESSONS

PAUL THEROUX brought to mind a quotation by Mark Twain: "Travel is fatal to prejudice, bigotry and narrow-mindedness," he wrote. "Broad, wholesome, charitable views of men and things cannot be acquired by vegetating in one little corner of the earth all one's lifetime." Perhaps the two authors are kindred spirits. The peripatetic Theroux penned a valuable glimpse of our country's infinitely diverse offerings—cultural, culinary, geographic and historic. Reading about his experiences left me feeling enriched, educated and empowered.

LEON J. HOFFMAN
ENCINO, CALIFORNIA

I THOROUGHLY enjoyed Theroux's "The Long Way Home" but not his dismissal of Santa Fe as "monochromatic." It is amazing that he failed to see the vivid colors of the high desert of the Southwest, colors that attracted Georgia O'Keeffe, perhaps the most "colorful" of American artists.

MIKE BOWLER
BALTIMORE, MARYLAND

UNDERVALUED WORKERS

MY COLLEAGUES and I were pleased to read "Where Donkeys Deliver," by Susan Orlean. Donkeys have been an important means of transportation since biblical times. In developing countries, they play a crucial role in providing transportation to low-income people, especially subsistence farmers. Women, who are often responsible for agricultural activities as well as household chores, benefit from owning a donkey. Despite their importance in the livelihood of so many people, donkeys are the most undervalued and least appreciated of all livestock species. Governments and agencies that want to promote self-sufficiency and reduce poverty need to focus more resources on traction animals. If you want to help people in developing countries, you have to help their animals.

MELVIN YOKOYAMA
PROFESSOR OF ANIMAL SCIENCE
MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

MANY THANKS to author Susan Orlean for reviving fond memories of our family's visit to Morocco in 1992. Dragging our 2-year-old son and 6-year-old daughter up and down the crowded, narrow walkways of Fez's medina seemed insurmountable until our guide, Mohammed, suggested hiring a donkey. The sturdy, gentle creature would cost us the equivalent of $15 for the day, he said. Not bad, I thought as we folded up our wheeled stroller and began strapping it onto Gray's saddlebags. "One problem," Mohammed whispered as he took us aside. "You must hire the driver for the day, too." Here's the pinch, we thought, as visions of souvenir shopping dimmed. "How much for the driver?" Obviously of less importance than the donkey, the driver cost us only $10 for the day.

SPENCER S. HARRIS
SHAFTER, CALIFORNIA

POLAND'S TREASURES

THANKS FOR THE wonderful article "Under the Polish Sun," by Frances Mayes. Like the finest of artists, the author painted the most beautiful and authentic pictures of Poland, its people, traditions and history. It was filled with valuable, little-known information, such as the location of one of only four Leonardo da Vinci paintings of women. Kudos to the author for also highlighting Polish cuisine, which we personally find to be one of the finest in the world. Even the title speaks of a bright, sunny, happy country, which those of us who know her know to be true.

MALGORZATA MARJANSKA-FISH AND PAUL FISH
INDIALANTIC, FLORIDA

LIKE FRANCES MAYES, my wife and I had the pleasure of visiting the delightful cities of Gdansk and Krakow. But unlike the author's husband, who was able to experience his Polish ancestors' living culture, we found only faint echoes of my German ancestors in Gdansk. A travel feature does not need to address the complexities and moral ambiguities of German expulsion from Poland in 1945, but a complete and honest look at

CONTINUED ON PAGE 90

Please send letters to **LettersEd@si.edu** or to **Letters, Smithsonian, MRC 513, P.O. Box 37012, Washington, D.C. 20013.** Include a telephone number and address. Letters may be edited for clarity or space. Because of the high volume of mail we receive, we cannot respond to all letters. Send queries about the Smithsonian Institution to info@si.edu or to VIARC, Public Inquiry Mail Service, P.O. Box 37012, Washington, D.C. 20013.

Julie and Bob S. are connoisseurs of antiques. But, more than that, they are collectors of stories.

The antiques they find tell the stories of people all over the country, and shed light on links to their personal heritage. These stories are what drive Julie and Bob to search far and wide for these hidden treasures. That's what brought them to this lovely antique store in historic Savannah that they discovered on Gozaic.com – a Web site supported by the *National Trust for Historic Preservation*. They planned an entire itinerary filled with activities and places to go to experience more of what enriches their lives. And that's a great beginning to their latest story!

Learn more about Julie and Bob's trips and create your own stories at www.gozaic.com/JulieandBob

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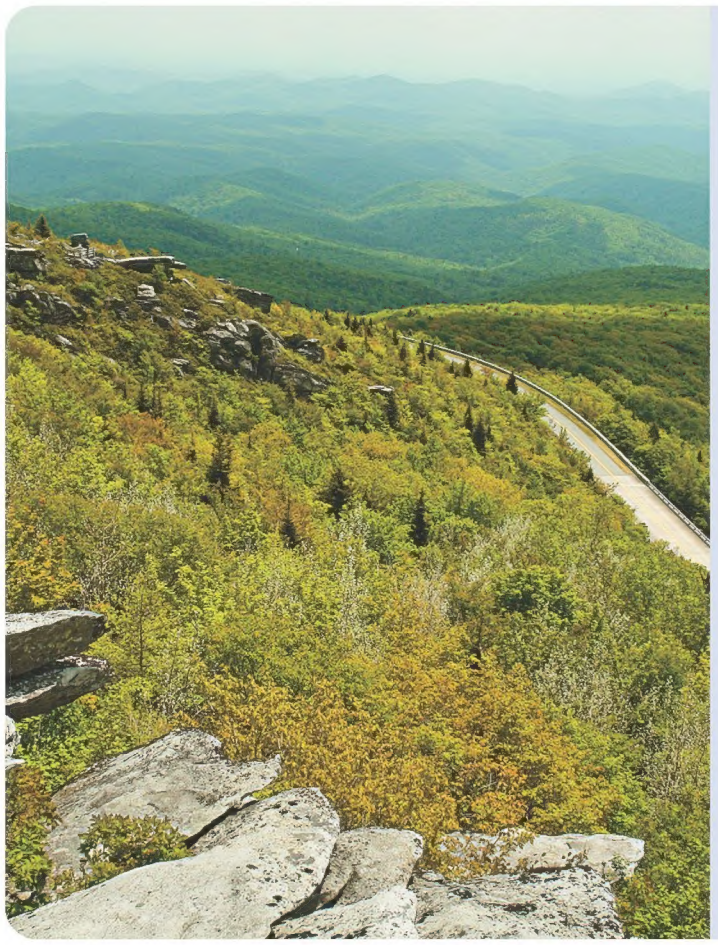

YOUR KIND OF TOWN

BY LINDA SINCLAIR
BOONE, NC

IT MUST HAVE BEEN the spirits of Daniel Boone and his fellow wilderness-seekers, tired of encroaching humans and their trappings, that drew me to this town over 3,000 feet above sea level in the Appalachian Mountains.

Getting to Boone is a steep climb from any direction. Every curve opens up a new picture, either sheer rock with layers of eons or a drop that leads to distant mountains. Even when you get to the town itself, it is evident that nature is still trying to creep in. The variety of trees and plants makes for an unending color show, spring beginnings to the final blaze in the fall.

Submit a **Your Kind of Town** story or photograph and find others at Smithsonian.com/yourkindoftown

TROPICAL DISCUSSION

I grew up in Hawaii where breadfruit trees grew in my yard. We simply scrubbed the fruits well, wrapped them in foil, added butter, salt and pepper and baked them until they had the texture of a baked potato not quite done.

—Rhonda Pickard, of Lighthouse Point, FL, on "Cooking With Breadfruit"
Smithsonian.com/breadfruit

FOREVER YOUNG

"Lester's playing transcends any era you attempt to put him in. The ease with which the Muse spoke through his horn will always inspire us, young and old."

—Dave Reynolds, of Yardley, PA, on "Lester Young Turns 100"
Smithsonian.com/prez

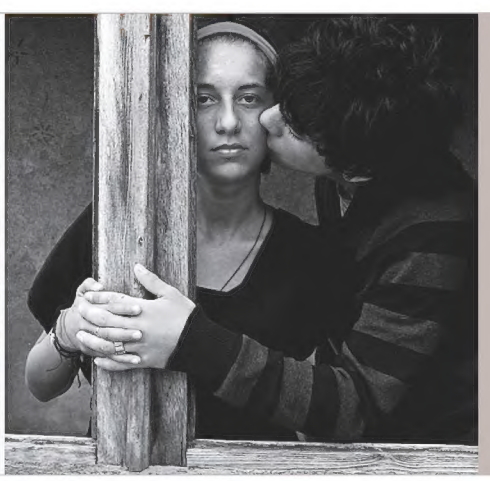

PHOTO CONTEST
EDITORS' PICK

"A friend has a cottage in the town and I was there on a holiday. The people in the pictures are also my friends. They're in an abandoned house, and the way they were framed was special. I usually do black-and-white photos. They are more expressive."

—Nino Tsava, Tbilisi, Georgia, on her 2008 photographs of youths in Buriani, Georgia

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Saigon Requiem

The death of Hugh Van Es, whose rooftop photograph symbolized the Vietnam War's

end, launched a "reunion" of those who covered the conflict **BY DAVID LAMB**

THE END WAS AT HAND. Saigon swirled with panicked mobs desperate to escape. On the outskirts of the surrounded city, more than a dozen North Vietnamese divisions prepared for their final assault. A Dutch photographer, Hugh Van Es, slipped through the crowds that day, snapping pictures, then hurried down Tu Do Street to the United Press International office to develop his film.

No sooner had he ensconced himself in the darkroom than a colleague, Bert Okuley, called out from an adjoining room, "Van Es, get out here! There's a chopper on that roof!" He pointed to an apartment building four blocks away, where an Air America Huey, operated by the CIA, was perched. Twenty-five or so people were scaling a makeshift ladder, trying to clamber aboard.

Van Es slapped a 300-mm lens on his Nikon and took ten frames from the tiny balcony near Okuley's desk. The chopper lifted off, overloaded with about 12 evacuees. Those left behind waited for hours for the helicopter to return. It never did. But all that day—April 29, 1975—and into the evening, the sky was alive with choppers darting to at least four pickup sites in what was to be the largest helicopter evacuation in history.

During his seven years in Vietnam, Van Es had taken dozens of memorable combat pictures, but it was this one hurried shot from the balcony that brought him lifelong fame and became the defining image of the fall of Saigon, and the tumultuous end of the Vietnam War. Though it has been reprinted thousands of times since (often

Van Es (above) spent much of the day on Saigon's streets but saw the line of evacuees (left) from his office window.

misidentified as an evacuation from the roof of the U.S. Embassy), his only payment was a one-time $150 bonus from UPI, which owned the photo rights.

"Money, or the lack of, never bothered Hugh," says Annie Van Es, his wife for 39 years. "Photography was his passion, not dollars." When a South Vietnamese photographer he knew inexplicably claimed authorship of the photograph years later, she says, Van Es' reaction was: "He is having a hard time in communist Saigon and needs to make a living; I can't blame him." Van Es looked up his old friend on a return trip to what had been renamed Ho Chi Minh City and never brought up the appropriation.

After the war, Van Es returned to Hong Kong to freelance. When he wasn't off covering conflicts in Bosnia, Afghanistan or the Philippines, friends could find him holding court at the Foreign Correspondents Club (FCC) bar in Hong Kong, swearing like a sailor, tossing down beers, smoking unfiltered cigarettes and telling war stories with caustic humor.

Last May, at age 67, Van Es suffered a brain hemorrhage and lay unconscious for a week in a Hong Kong hospital. Derek Williams, a CBS sound man during the war, put out the word over a voluminous correspondents' e-mail list so Annie wouldn't have to supply his many friends and colleagues with daily updates. Vietnam-era journalists chimed in with comments of encouragement, hitting the "reply to all" button. Soon people who hadn't been in touch since bonding on jungle battlefields a generation ago started corresponding.

Thus was born a members-only Google discussion group, "Vietnam Old Hacks," to share madcap remembrances, to argue about history and where to get the best *pho ga* (chicken noodle broth), to reflect on former Defense Secretary Robert McNamara's death, to find out who among their fraternal gang is dead and who is still alive. Plans are underway for a real-life reunion in Vietnam next April. Seventy of the 200-plus members say they plan to attend.

"Jeez, we've certainly gone our own way for all these years, but then—bang!—we're all back together again," says Carl Robinson, a wartime Associated Press reporter and photo editor.

Van Es was proudest of his pictures of the 1969 battle for Hill 937, or Hamburger Hill (above), which U.S. and South Vietnamese forces took after a costly ten-day assault.

Like Van Es, many of us who covered the war found ourselves forever in the grip of Vietnam. No other story, no other war, quite measured up. The exotic charm and dangerous undercurrents of Saigon were seductive, the adrenaline rush of survival intoxicating. We hitchhiked around the country on military helicopters and roamed the battlefields without censorship. The Associated Press lists 73 of our colleagues as killed in South Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos, yet as individuals we felt invulnerable.

"Photography was his passion," says Van Es' wife, Annie (with him in 2008).

"I've searched for an answer why I stayed all those years," says George Esper, an AP reporter who spent nearly a decade in Vietnam. "What I keep coming back to was a young nurse from upstate New York I saw on a firebase. It was monsoon season. We were under rocket attack. She was tending the badly wounded. Some died in her arms. And I said, 'Wow. What a woman! Why are you here?' and she said, 'Because I've never felt so worthwhile in my life.' That's how I felt, too."

"Did Vietnam teach me anything professionally?" says Loren Jenkins, a wartime reporter for *Newsweek* who is now the foreign editor of National Public Radio. "Absolutely. It taught me never to believe an official. It made me a terrific skeptic."

"I honestly believe those years gave [Hugh] the best memories and most meaning to his life," his wife said after he died in the Hong Kong hospital, never having regained consciousness. The FCC set up a "Van Es Corner" in the bar with a display of his Vietnam photographs. Nearby is a small plaque marking where his colleague and drinking buddy Bert Okuley had a fatal stroke in 1993, a double Jack Daniels in hand. For her part, Annie honored only one of Van Es' two requests for his exit: his wake at the FCC was indeed boisterous and celebratory, but his coffin was not on display and did not serve as the bar.

DAVID LAMB *covered Vietnam for UPI and the* Los Angeles Times. *He is the author of* Vietnam, Now *(2003).*

HUGH VAN ES / AP IMAGES; AP IMAGES; PP. 8-9 BETTMANN / CORBIS (2)

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WILD THINGS

LIFE AS WE KNOW IT

BY AMANDA BENSEN, ABBY CALLARD, T.A. FRAIL, MEGAN GAMBINO AND LAURA HELMUTH

LOOKING FOR A GOOD HOME

In the early 1900s, UC Berkeley's Joseph Grinnell surveyed bird territories in California's Sierra Nevada. Biologists have now found that out of 53 bird species, 48 (a Western tanager) have moved. Why? Climate change, they say. Many of the birds' new ranges are farther north or higher in altitude, with temperatures or rainfall akin to where they lived before.

MALES NO LONGER NEEDED

An ant native to Central and South America has done away with males, researchers in Texas and Brazil confirm. Scientists suspected that *Mycocepurus smithii* reproduces asexually; new tests show that queens don't use sperm to fertilize their eggs. Without males to keep the gene pool diverse, though, the ants could accumulate enough mutations to go extinct.

CAVE MAN STYLE

When did people learn to make thread? Judging from wild flax fibers found in a cave in the Caucasus region of Georgia, at least 30,000 years ago. The fibers had been knotted together and dyed. Researchers identified violet, red, black and turquoise threads in clay sediments, providing one of the earliest known examples of humans using plant fibers. Other remains—including the spores of a cloth-eating fungus—suggest that such fibers were made into textiles.

TINY TYRANT

Paleontologists thought that the distinct build of *Tyrannosaurus rex*—strong jaws, fast legs and puny arms—evolved as a byproduct of its gigantic size. But *Raptorex kriegsteini*, newly described by a University of Chicago-led team, proves otherwise. Almost twice as old as *T. rex*, the 10-foot-long, 150-pound dino has the same body plan, only scaled down to about 1/100th size (above: the two skulls).

Observed

NAME: The leopard gecko, or *Eublepharis macularius*.
TAILS THEY LOSE: Like many other lizards, the leopard gecko can shed its tail to distract predators.
RHYTHM THEY LACK: What's unusual, researchers from Clemson and the University of Calgary have found, is that the detached tails move not just back and forth, as in other species, but also flip and flop.
POTENTIAL THEY HAVE: Studying leopard gecko tails could help scientists understand complex movements that aren't guided by a central nervous system; they say the information might prove useful to people with spinal cord injuries.

See the gecko's tail flop at Smithsonian.com/WildThings

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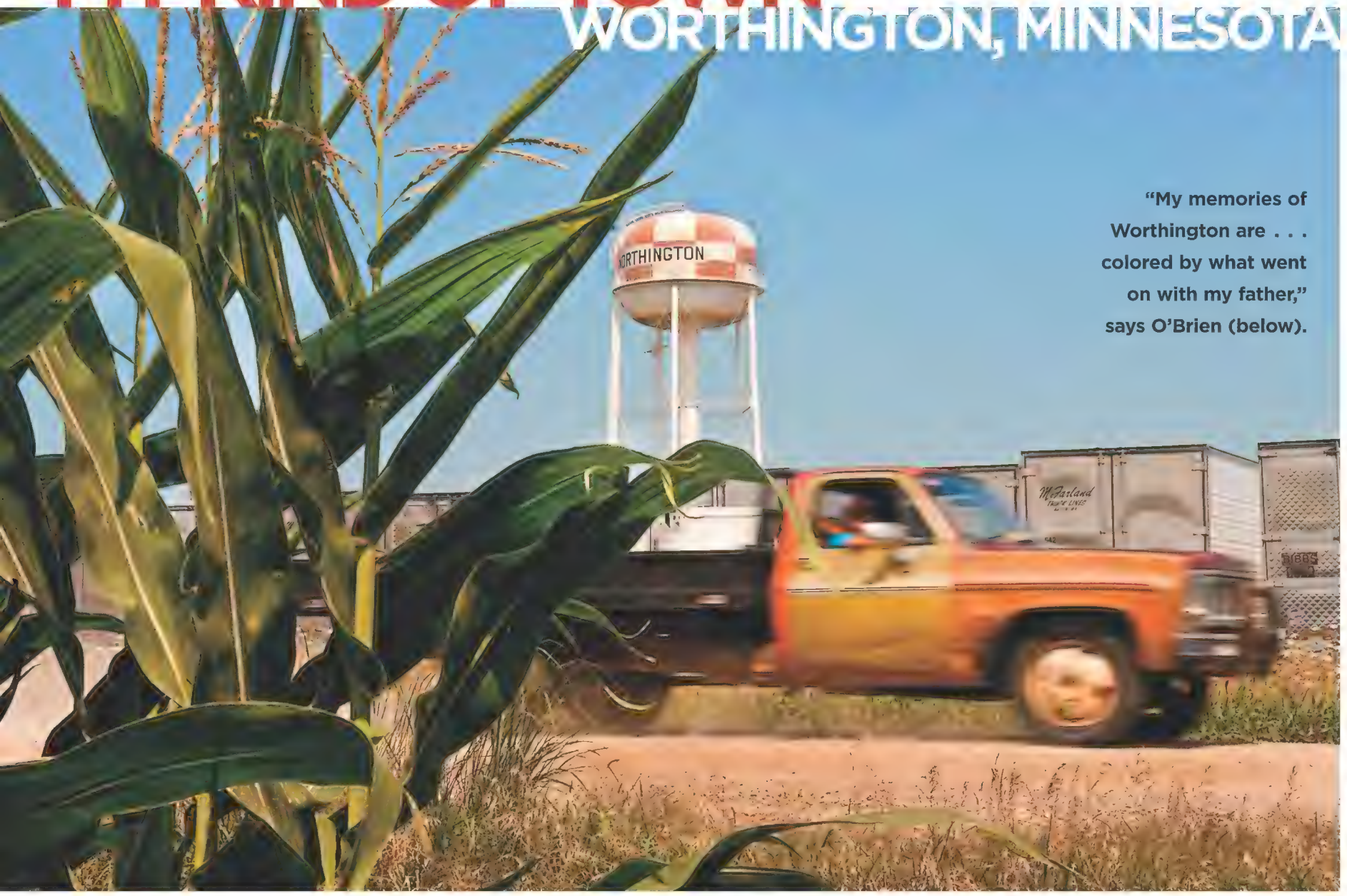
MY KIND OF TOWN
WORTHINGTON, MINNESOTA



"My memories of Worthington are . . . colored by what went on with my father," says O'Brien (below).

Fenced In

The novelist revisits his past to come to terms with his rural hometown **BY TIM O'BRIEN** PHOTOGRAPHS BY LAYNE KENNEDY

FROM THE YEAR OF HIS BIRTH in 1914 until the outbreak of war in 1941, my father lived in a mostly white, mostly working-class, mostly Irish Catholic neighborhood in Brooklyn, New York. He was an altar boy. He played stickball and freeze tag on safe, tree-lined streets. To hear my dad talk about it, one would've thought he had grown up in some long-lost Eden, an urban paradise that had vanished beneath the seas of history, and until his death a few years ago, he held fast to an impossibly idyllic, relentlessly romanticized Brooklyn of the 1920s and '30s. No matter that his own father died in 1925. No matter that he went to work as a 12-year-old to help support a family of five. No matter the hardships of the Great Depression. Despite everything, my dad's eyes would soften as he reminisced about weekend excursions to Coney Island, apartment buildings festooned with flower boxes, the aroma of hot bread at the corner bakery, Saturday afternoons at Ebbets Field, the noisy bustle along Flatbush Avenue, pickup football games on the Parade Grounds, ice-cream cones that could be had for a nickel and a polite thank-you.

Following Pearl Harbor, my father joined the Navy, and soon afterward, without the dimmest inkling that he had stepped off a great cliff, he left behind both Brooklyn and his youth. He served on a destroyer at Iwo Jima and Okinawa, met my mother in Norfolk, Virginia, got married in 1945, and, for reasons still unclear to me, set off with my mom to live amid

BOTTOM: DARREN CARROLL

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the corn and soybeans of southern Minnesota. (True, my mother had grown up in the area, but even so, why didn't they settle in Brooklyn? Why not Pasadena or even the Bahamas?)

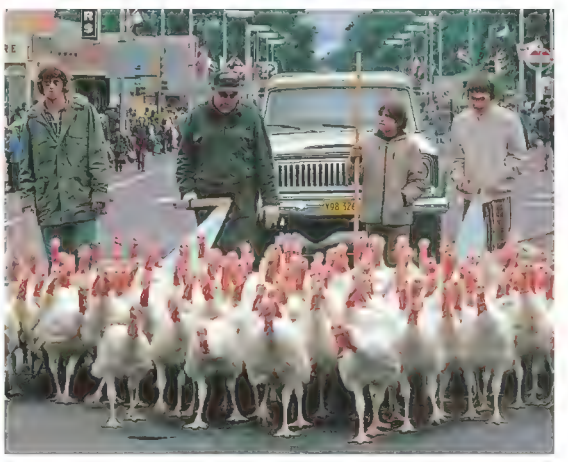
I showed up in October 1946, part of an early surge that would become a great nationwide baby boom. My sister, Kathy, was born a year later. In the summer of 1954, after several years in Austin, Minnesota, our family moved across the state to the small, rural town of Worthington, where my dad became regional manager for a life insurance company. To me, at age 7, Worthington seemed a perfectly splendid spot on the earth. There was ice skating in winter, organized baseball in summer, a fine old Carnegie library, a decent golf course, a Dairy Queen, an outdoor movie theater and a lake clean enough for swimming.

fit beautifully on one man but too snugly on another, I have come to believe that Worthington—or maybe the rural Midwest in general—made my dad feel somehow limited, consigned to a life he hadn't planned for himself, marooned as a permanent stranger in a place he could not understand in his blood. An outgoing, extravagantly verbal man, he now lived among famously laconic Norwegians. A man accustomed to a certain vertical scale to things, he lived on prairies so flat and so unvaried that one spot could be mistaken for any other. A man who had dreamed of becoming a writer, he found himself driving down lonely farm lanes with his insurance applications and a halfhearted sales pitch.

Then, as now, Worthington was a long way from Brooklyn, and not just in

the start. Tidy farms sprang up. Sturdy Germans and Scandinavians began fencing in and squaring off the Sioux's stolen hunting grounds. Alongside the few surviving Indian names—Lake Okabena, Ocheyedan River—such solidly European names as Jackson and Fulda and Lismore and Worthington were soon transposed to the prairie. Throughout my youth, and still today, the town was at its core a support system for outlying farms. No coincidence that I played shortstop for the Rural Electric Association's Little League team. No coincidence that a meatpacking plant became, and remains, the town's primary employer.

For my father, still a relatively young man, it had to be bewildering to find himself in a landscape of grain elevators, silos, farm implement dealerships,



Although Worthington has become more cosmopolitan as newcomers have come to work at such places as the JBS meatpacking plant, town traditions remain strong (from left: Panaderia Mi Tierra; JBS; annual King Turkey Day parade).

More impressively, the town styled itself Turkey Capital of the World, a title that struck me as both grand and a bit peculiar. Among the earth's offerings, turkeys seemed a strange thing to boast about. Still, I was content for the first year or two. I was very close to happy.

My father, though, did not care for the place. Too isolated. Too dull and pastoral. Too far removed from his big-city youth.

He soon began drinking. He drank a lot, and he drank often, and with each passing year he drank more. Over the next decade he twice ended up in a state treatment facility for alcoholics. None of this, of course, was the fault of the town, any more than soybeans can be faulted for being soybeans. Rather, like a suit of clothes that may

the geographical sense. Tucked into the southwestern corner of Minnesota—12 miles from Iowa, 45 miles from South Dakota—the town was home to about 8,000 people when our family arrived in 1954. For centuries the surrounding plains had been the land of the Sioux, but by the mid-1950s not much remained of that: a few burial mounds, an arrowhead here and there, and some borrowed nomenclature. To the south was Sioux City, to the west Sioux Falls, to the northeast Mankato, where on December 26, 1862, a group of 38 Sioux were hanged by the federal government in a single mass execution, the result of a bloody revolt earlier that year.

Founded in the 1870s as a railroad watering station, Worthington was an agricultural community almost from

feed stores and livestock sales barns. I don't mean to be deterministic about it. Human suffering can rarely be reduced to a single cause, and my dad may well have ended up with similar problems no matter where he lived. Yet unlike Chicago or New York, small-town Minnesota did not allow a man's failings to disappear beneath a veil of numbers. People talked. Secrets did not stay secret. And for me, already full of shame and embarrassment at my dad's drinking, the humiliating glare of public scrutiny began eating away at my stomach and at my self-esteem. I overheard things in school. There was teasing and innuendo. I felt pitied at times. Other times I felt judged. Some of this was imagined, no doubt, but some was as real as a toothache. One summer after-

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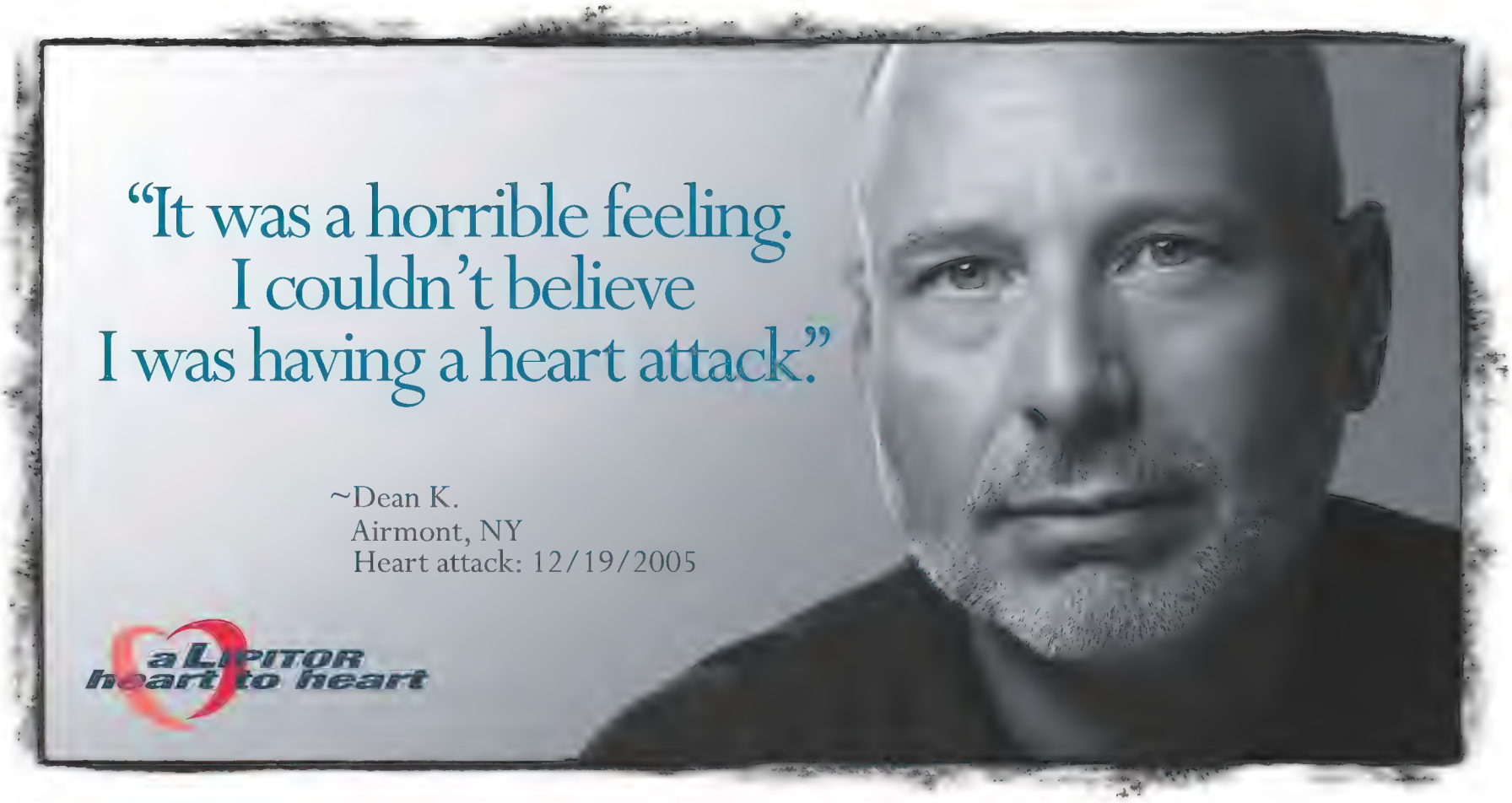

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noon in the late '50s, I heard myself explaining to my teammates that my dad would no longer be coaching Little League, that he was in a state hospital, that he might or might not be back home that summer. I did not utter the word "alcohol"—nothing of the sort—but the mortification of that day still opens a trapdoor in my heart.

Decades later, my memories of Worthington are as much colored by what went on with my father—his increasing bitterness, the gossip, the midnight quarrels, the silent suppers, the bottles hidden away in the garage—as by anything having to do with the town itself. I began to hate the place. Not for what it was, but for what it was to me, and to my dad. After all, I loved my father. He was a good man. He was funny and intelligent and well read and conversant in history and a terrific storyteller and generous with his time and great with kids. Yet every object in town seemed to shimmer with an opposite judgment. The water tower overlooking Centennial Park seemed censorious and unforgiving. Main Street's Gobbler Café, with its crowd of Sunday diners fresh from church, seemed to hum with a soft, persistent rebuke.

Again, this was partly an echo of my own pain and fear. But pain and fear have a way of influencing our attitudes toward the most innocent, most inanimate objects in the world. Places are defined not just by their physicality, but also by the joys and tragedies that transpire in those places. A tree is a tree until it is used for a hanging. A liquor store is a liquor store until your father almost owns the joint. (Years later, as a soldier in Vietnam, I would encounter this dynamic again. The paddies and the mountains and the red clay trails—all of it seemed to pulse with the purest evil.) After departing for college in 1964, I never again lived in Worthington. My parents stayed on well into their old age, finally moving in 2002 to a retirement community in San Antonio. My dad died two years later.

A few months ago, when I paid a return visit to Worthington, a deep and familiar sadness settled inside me as I approached the town on Highway 60. The flat, repetitive landscape carried the feel of eternity, utterly without limit, reaching off toward a vast horizon just as our lives do. Maybe I was feeling old. Maybe, like my father, I was conscious of my own lost youth.

I stayed in Worthington only a short while, but long enough to discover that much had changed. In place of the almost entirely white community of 50 years ago, I found a town in which 42 languages or dialects are spoken, a place teeming with immigrants from Laos, Peru, Ethiopia, Sudan, Thailand, Vietnam and Mexico. Soccer is played on the field where I once booted ground balls. On the premises of the old Coast to Coast hardware store is a thriving establishment called Top Asian Foods; the Comunidad Cristiana de Worthington occupies the site of a restaurant where I once tried to bribe high-school dates with Cokes and burgers. In the town's phone book, alongside the Andersons and Jensens of my youth, there were such surnames as Ngamsang and Ngoc and Flores and Figueroa.

The new, cosmopolitan Worthington, with a population of around 11,000, did not arise without tensions and resentments. A county Web page listing incarcerations contains a hefty percentage of Spanish, Asian and African names, and, as might be expected, few newcomers are among Worthington's most prosperous citizens. Barriers of language and tradition haven't completely vanished.

But the sadness I'd felt on returning home was replaced by a surprised, even shocked admiration for the community's flexibility and resilience. (If towns could suffer heart attacks, I would've imagined Worthington dropping stone-dead at such radical change.) I was astonished, yes, and I was also a little proud of the place. Whatever its growing pains and residual problems, the insular, homogenized community of my youth had managed to accept and accommodate a truly amazing new diversity.

"I was astonished, yes, and . . . proud of the place," says the author (from left: basketball in Centennial Park; Lake Okabena). "The insular, homogenized community of my youth had managed to accept and accommodate a truly amazing new diversity."

Near the end of my visit, I stopped briefly in front of my old house on 11th Avenue. The day was sunny and still. The house seemed deserted. For a while I just sat there, feeling all kinds of things, half hoping for some closing benediction. I suppose I was seeking ghosts from my past. Maybe a glimpse of my dad. Maybe the two of us playing catch on a summer afternoon. But of course he was gone now, and so was the town I grew up in.

TIM O'BRIEN's *books include* Going After Cacciato *and* The Things They Carried.

IMPORTANT FACTS

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High cholesterol is more than just a number, it's a risk factor that should not be ignored. If your doctor said you have high cholesterol, you may be at an increased risk for heart attack and stroke. But the good news is, you can take steps to lower your cholesterol.

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WHO IS LIPITOR FOR?

Who can take LIPITOR:

- People who cannot lower their cholesterol enough with diet and exercise
- Adults and children over 10

Who should NOT take LIPITOR:

- Women who are pregnant, may be pregnant, or may become pregnant. LIPITOR may harm your unborn baby. If you become pregnant, stop LIPITOR and call your doctor right away.
- Women who are breast-feeding. LIPITOR can pass into your breast milk and may harm your baby.
- People with liver problems
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Tell your doctor:

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- If you drink more than 2 alcoholic drinks a day
- If you have diabetes or kidney problems
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ABOUT LIPITOR

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LIPITOR can lower the risk of heart attack, stroke, certain types of heart surgery, and chest pain in patients who have heart disease or risk factors for heart disease such as:

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- **Liver problems.** Your doctor may do blood tests to check your liver before you start LIPITOR and while you are taking it.

Call your doctor right away if you have:

- Unexplained muscle weakness or pain, especially if you have a fever or feel very tired
- Allergic reactions including swelling of the face, lips, tongue, and/or throat that may cause difficulty in breathing or swallowing which may require treatment right away
- Nausea, vomiting, or stomach pain
- Brown or dark-colored urine
- Feeling more tired than usual
- Your skin and the whites of your eyes turn yellow
- Allergic skin reactions

Common side effects of LIPITOR are:

- Diarrhea
- Upset stomach
- Muscle and joint pain
- Changes in some blood tests

HOW TO TAKE LIPITOR

Do:

- Take LIPITOR as prescribed by your doctor.
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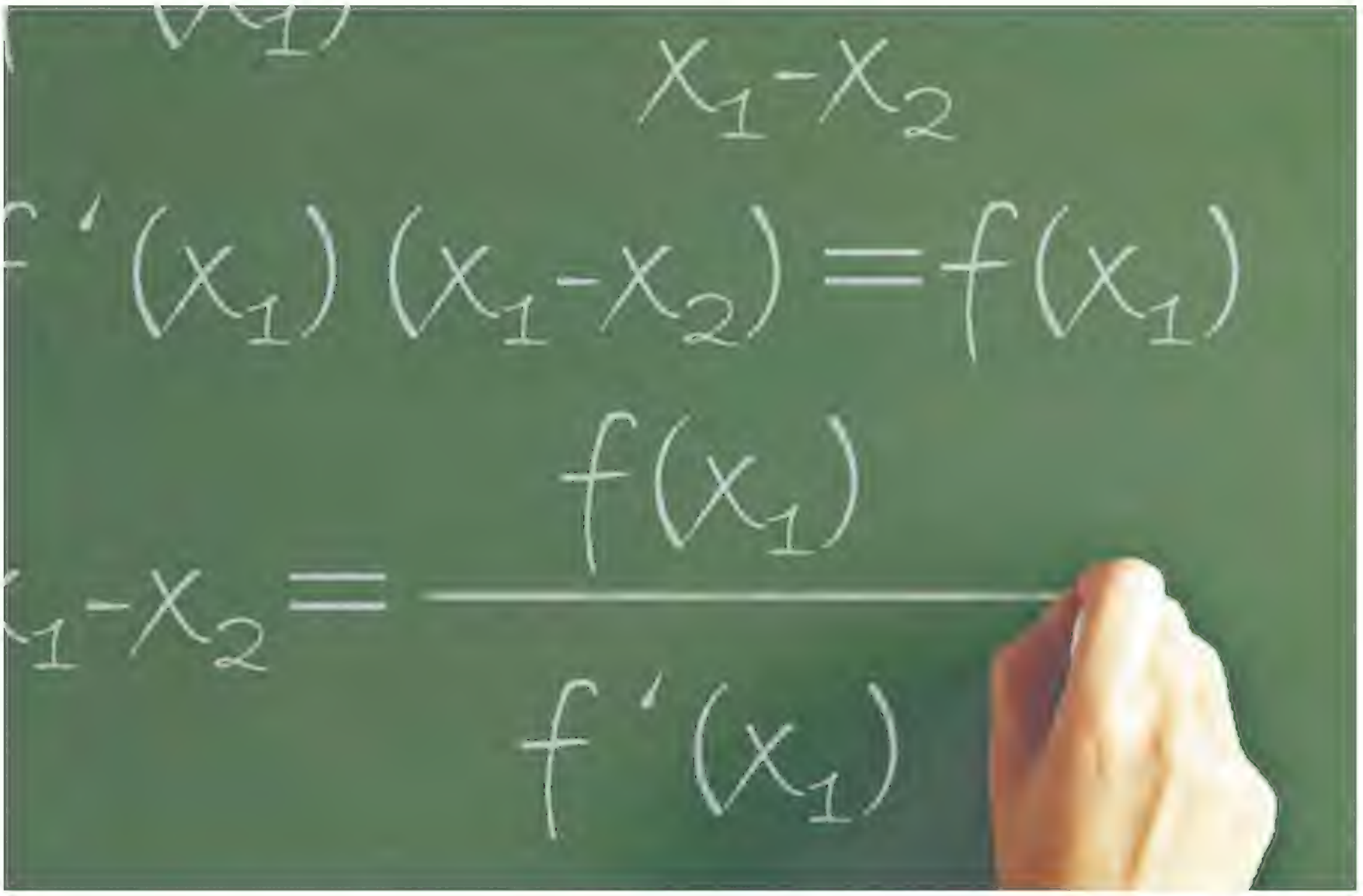

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Around the Mall

SCENES AND SIGHTINGS FROM THE SMITHSONIAN MUSEUMS AND BEYOND

MEMORY MAKER

FOR 50 YEARS, JOHN MARSHALL DOCUMENTED ONE OF AFRICA'S LAST REMAINING HUNTER-GATHERER TRIBES. THE UNITED NATIONS HAS DECLARED HIS WORK "ONE OF THE SEMINAL VISUAL ANTHROPOLOGY PROJECTS OF THE 20TH CENTURY"

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John Marshall began filming the Ju/'hoansi people in 1950. Later, he set up a foundation to help the tribe in its struggle for self-determination under apartheid-era laws.

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FROM THE CASTLE

FDR's Stamps

G. WAYNE CLOUGH

PRESIDENTS NEED RELAXATION, whether playing golf or clearing brush. Franklin Delano Roosevelt said he owed his life to his hobbies—"especially stamp collecting." "Delivering Hope: FDR & Stamps of the Great Depression," an exhibition at the National Postal Museum (NPM), tells the story of Roosevelt's passion. He began collecting stamps at the age of 8. They gave him stories from history and also solace during his long recovery from polio. As president, FDR used stamps as a means to help restore the nation's confidence. New stamps highlighted national parks, world's fairs and engineering feats like Boulder (Hoover) Dam. FDR suggested themes, images, colors, even designs. This small but compelling exhibition features six original stamp sketches by FDR—including a map tracing Byrd's Antarctic expedition, Whistler's famous painting of his mother for Mother's Day and a bust of Susan

A National Postal Museum exhibition includes postage stamps that President Franklin D. Roosevelt helped design (left: the Byrd Expedition). FDR's stamps helped him relax.

B. Anthony to mark an anniversary of women's suffrage. The issuance of 20 billion "Win the War" stamps—with a design selected by FDR, an eagle's wings forming a V for victory—turned letter-writing into a patriotic act. The president's wooden stamp box accompanied him everywhere, except on his final trip to Warm Springs, Georgia, where he died April 12, 1945. His friend Minnie Astor had borrowed the box to commission a leather replica for a Christmas gift. You can see the wooden stamp box and the rest of the exhibition at the NPM until June 6, 2010, or at postalmuseum.si.edu/deliveringhope.

"Artful Animals," on view at the National Museum of African Art, is another compelling exhibition. It is hard to ignore an elephant. "When an elephant is thin," goes an African proverb, "its meat will still fill a hundred baskets." But no one would guess that a whimsical wooden coffin shaped like an elephant would welcome visitors to "Artful Animals," through February 21, 2010, and at africa.si.edu/exhibits/animals.

"The exhibition will engage your mind and tickle your heart," says museum director Johnnetta Cole. The 130 artworks and Eliot Elisofon Archives photographs feature familiar, unusual and even fantastical animals, including the Chi Wara—a mythical creature that is part antelope, aardvark and pangolin (scaly anteater). Animals serve as metaphors for human traits. A butterfly knows where nectar can be found, symbolizing knowledge; a crocodile eats a river's fish, symbolizing power. The art offers insights into human relationships: with nature, the spirit world and one another. Exhibitions such as these enliven the mind and touch the soul—the Smithsonian at its best.

G. WAYNE CLOUGH *is Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution.*

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NATIONAL POSTAL MUSEUM, SI (3)

PRICELESS

NOW KEEPING COMPANY WITH THE MAGNA CARTA, THE JOHN MARSHALL ARCHIVE DOCUMENTS A WAY OF LIFE

Marshall's films are "high profile," sought after by scholars and filmmakers alike, says archivist Karma Foley.

THE AFRICAN GIRAFFE stumbles to a halt, bewildered by the poisoned spears studding its breast and flanks. Moments later, it falls stiffly backward. The giraffe's slender legs point skyward, then swing sideways as it collapses in the desert dust.

The scene flashes to a Ju/'hoansi hunter, tearing into a joint of glistening red meat with his knife.

"Sorry, I should have warned you about that part—a little sad, isn't it?" says film archivist Karma Foley, 34, as she presses a button to pause the flickering images on the video monitor at the Smithsonian's Human Studies Film Archives (HSFA). Established in 1981, the archives are dedicated to collecting and preserving anthropological films—including John Marshall's footage of the Ju/'hoansi (*zhun-twa-see*) people, whom he considered a second family.

Marshall, who died at age 72 in 2005, meticulously documented, on film and video, the lives of the hunter-gatherers in northeast Namibia between 1950 and 2000. He donated more than 700 hours of his footage to the HSFA. Recently, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (Unesco) added the Marshall archive to its Memory of the World Register—joining Anne Frank's diary, the Magna Carta and other watershed items. The Marshall archive, according to Unesco, is "one of the seminal visual anthropology projects of the 20th century."

Foley knew Marshall at the end of his career and helped him edit and produce a six-hour retrospective series, *A Kalahari Family*, released in 2002. "He could be difficult to work with because he demanded perfection, but it was easy to deal with that because you knew his heart was in the right place," she says.

Marshall (right) with Ju/'hoansi friend Tsamkxao, in Namibia (1978).

Marshall was born into a wealthy New England family. His father, Laurence, was the founding president of the radar defense company Raytheon, and when he retired, he wanted to do something useful. So when anthropologists at Harvard's Peabody Museum told him that no one knew if the tribal people of Africa's Kalahari Desert still engaged in hunter-gatherering, he decided to find out.

IN 1950, Laurence and his 18-year-old son, John, made their first trip to the South African territory that is now Namibia. After questioning local people through interpreters, they deduced a likely spot to find the Ju/'hoansi—a tribe of about 1,200 people who roamed freely over hundreds of miles within a northern region of the Kalahari called Nyae Nyae. The Ju/'hoansi plucked anything edible from the earth, sucked water from roots and occasionally feasted on wild animals. It was not an easy life. "We were owners of thirst and owners of hunger," Toma Tsamkxao, a Ju/'hoansi man who befriended John, says in one of the films.

The Marshalls, along with John's mother, Lorna, and sister, Elizabeth, returned the following year to conduct a full ethnographic study. John, who had no filmmaking experience, learned quickly. His father "handed John a 16-mm film camera and said, 'You need to record everything we see, otherwise no one will believe us,'" says Foley.

John Marshall returned to Nyae Nyae many times over the next decade, camera always in hand. In 1958, as his films began to gain international attention, Marshall was banned from the region by the South African government, which likely saw his support for indigenous peoples as a challenge to its apartheid regime, Foley says. By the time Marshall was able to return, 20 years later, Tsamkxao and the rest of his people were living on a reservation. Their traditional way of life, which had lasted for millennia, was over.

"Looking back, I'm struck by how naive we all were about the future," Marshall says in *A Kalahari Family*. "Neither Toma's family nor my family was prepared for the speed and magnitude of the change to come."

Designating Marshall's work as part of the Memory of the World project is fitting, Foley says. "At one time all people lived by hunting and gathering. It's a shared human experience going all the way back." **AMANDA BENSEN**

See John Marshall's videos of the Ju/'hoansi at Smithsonian.com/marshall

ANDREW CUTRARO; FROM "A KALAHARI FAMILY" / HUMAN STUDIES FILM ARCHIVES, SI

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THE OBJECT AT HAND | Artist's Journals

ARCHIVES OF AMERICAN ART

DRAWN FROM LIFE

Artist Janice Lowry's illustrated diaries recorded her history—and ours

BY OWEN EDWARDS

WHEN JANICE LOWRY turned 11, inspired by reading *The Diary of Anne Frank*, she began keeping a journal. Not unusual for a young girl. What's unusual is that throughout her life, Lowry—who died of liver cancer this past September at age 63—kept up her diaries.

From childhood on, Lowry filled small notebooks with daily musings and drawings. Then, in the mid-1970s, she moved to a larger format, 7 1/2- by 9 1/2-inch notebooks. For almost 40 years, Lowry—an artist best known for her intricate, three-foot-tall assemblages—filled the roomier notebooks with jottings and sketches. The pages contain everything from original drawings, collages and rubber-stamp images to observations about herself and the world, including the commonplace "to-do" lists many of us make: "pay bills/make plane res/get asthma med/Judi birthday gift."

Each notebook spans about four months, transcending minutiae to record the life of our times as well as her own. Entries touch on events from a child's birthday to the contested presidential election of 2000 and the anniversary of the September 11 attacks. This past July, the Smithsonian Archives of American Art acquired all 126 volumes.

Lowry (in her Whittier, California, studio at age 37 in 1983) regarded the notebooks as "126 chapters of a memoir."

Artists' journals can be an art form unto themselves, a taxonomy of days that attempts to capture the random rush of creativity. Free of formal constraints (beyond the size of the page), artists can use anything that comes to mind, eye or hand. "I call these books 'reportage,'" Lowry said in an August interview. "There are certain themes that run through the

I think it's hard when I have worked for 30 years
LONGEVITY
IdyllwildARTS Summer Program 2003
The Sheltering Sky
VERTICAL SECTION ON CD
Fig. 417. Spherical Niche In Stone
(See photograph, Fig. 416 page 174A)
Alternative Direction of View
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416.

A sampling of pages from Janice Lowry's journals is at Smithsonian.com/lowry

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Above: Front side panel of outer coffin of Djehutynakht (detail), Egyptian, Middle Kingdom, late Dynasty 11–early Dynasty 12, 2010–1961 BC. Cedar. Harvard University–Boston Museum of Fine Arts Expedition.

journals consistently—health, motherhood, political things, being an artist, even fashion and television. Originally, I saw them as books for my sons, so they could see my progress through life. Now they're 126 chapters of a memoir."

Lowry was an art student raising two young sons when she switched to the large-format journals in 1974. "At the time, I didn't have any role models to help me figure out how to do these journals," she recalled. "When I had a vision of something, I could just do it."

In 2006, Patricia House, then director of the Muckenthaler Cultural Center in Fullerton, California, visited Lowry's Santa Ana studio because she intended to include Lowry's assemblages in an upcoming gallery show.

There, House first saw the neatly stacked diaries; she instantly recognized their value and informed Lowry that the collection needed a "steward."

"I've seen a lot of artistic diaries, but these were different," says House. "I saw works of art."

Lowry took her colleague's advice. She put together seven of what she called "packets"—illustrated introductions to the journals—and submitted them to research centers and museums around the country. Liza Kirwin, who is curator of manuscripts at the Archives of American Art, received one of them.

"The packet was very inventive," Kirwin recalls, "with a handmade envelope and very curious contents. It was such a creative expression of an artist's life. About 20 seconds after looking at it, I sent an e-mail message [to Lowry] saying that the Smithsonian should have the journals."

Shortly after, Kirwin says, the artist sent two complete journals to the Archives. "We used them right away for an exhibition of sketchbooks," Kirwin remembers, thereby allowing Lowry to cross off a very important item on one of her last to-do lists: "Find steward for journals."

OWEN EDWARDS *is a freelance writer and author of the book* Elegant Solutions.

Q&A

In 1955, **EMMETT TILL**—a 14-year-old African-American boy (below left) visiting Money, Mississippi, from Chicago—was murdered after whistling at a white woman. His mother insisted that her son's beaten body be displayed in a glass-topped casket (below right) for the world to see. Till's murder became a rallying point for the civil rights movement. His family recently donated the casket to the Smithsonian. Till's cousin **SIMEON WRIGHT**, 67, was with him the night he was kidnapped and murdered. He spoke with the magazine's Abby Callard.

WHAT WAS EMMETT LIKE? He loved to tell jokes and loved for people to tell him jokes. In school, he might pull the fire alarm just to get out of class. To him that would be funny. We found out that what was dangerous to us was funny to him. He really had no sense of danger.

THOUGH THE TWO ACCUSED MURDERERS EVENTUALLY CONFESSED, THEY WERE ACQUITTED AT THE TRIAL. WERE YOU SURPRISED BY THE VERDICT? I was shocked. I'm still shocked. I believe sincerely that if they had convicted those men 54 years ago that Emmett's story wouldn't have been in the headlines. We'd have forgotten about it by now.

HOW DID THE CASKET BECOME AVAILABLE? In 2005, we had to exhume Emmett's body. The State of Mississippi would not reopen the case unless we could prove that the body buried at the cemetery was Emmett's. State law prohibited us from placing that casket back into the grave, so we had to bury him in a new casket.

WHAT FEELINGS DOES SEEING THE CASKET BRING BACK? I see something that held the object of a mother's unconditional love. And then I see a love that was interrupted and shattered by racial hatred without a cause. It brings back memories that some would like to forget, but to forget is to deny life itself.

WHAT IS YOUR HOPE FOR THE CASKET? I hope it's going to make people think "If I had been there in 1955, I would have done all I could to help that family." If it could just evoke just that one thought in someone, it would be enough, because then they would go out and help their community.

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Read more of our interview with Simeon Wright at Smithsonian.com/till

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- Michael Gross

Imagine a locomotive pushing through a harsh winter night, thick snowflakes raining across its headlight. The muffled steam whistle is the only hint of civilization through the storm. More so than cars, planes, or ships, railroads evoke a sense of memory and connectedness. When you look at a model train set, you can look back into your past and come up with a memory that matters . . .like that special person who travelled a continent just to see you. Coming together is what the B&O Railroad Museum's Holiday Festival of Trains is all about. A train set is more than just a novelty— it's a symbol of how families are linked across distances and generations.

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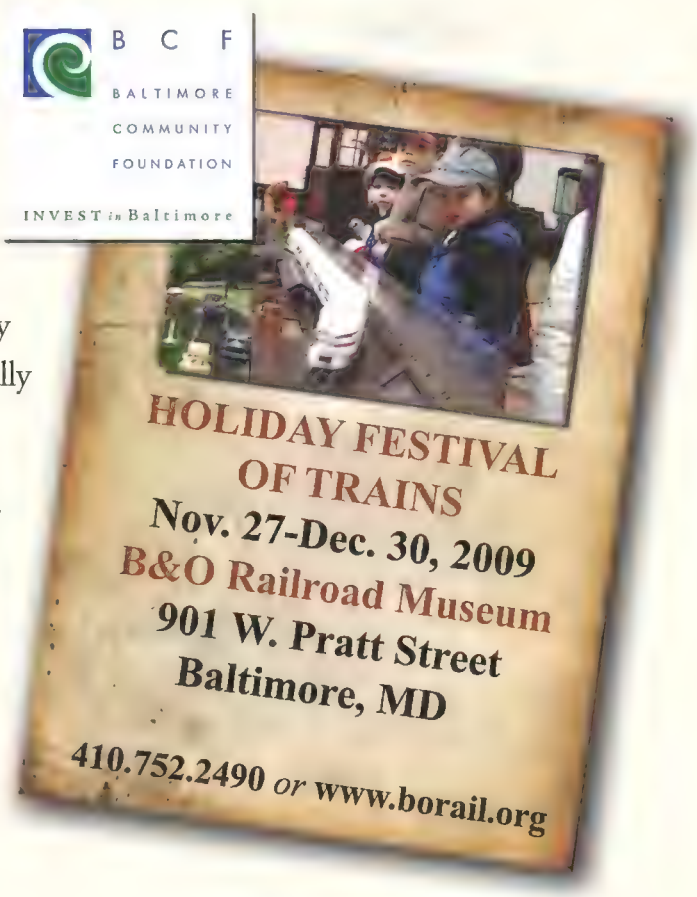
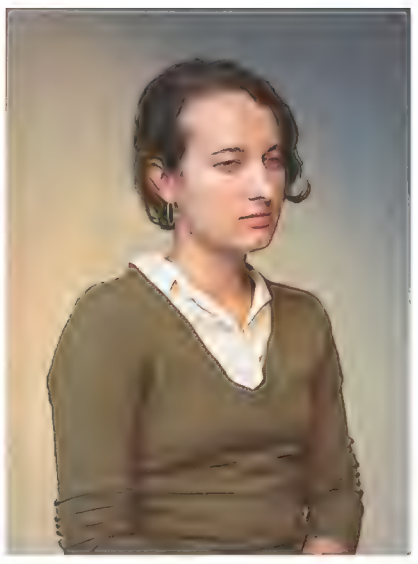
Visit the B&O Railroad Museum's Holiday Festival of Trains this season. Maybe it will remind you what it was like when you rode your first train, or spark a special memory. Maybe it will just give you a chance to share something special with someone you love.



What's Up

THE SOUL OF WIT

The American Art Museum presents the first major retrospective in three decades of works by California artist William T. Wiley. His playful pieces (left: *Sweet Lil' Pristine*, 1985) employ rhymes ("Sweet Sixteen") and puns. On display through January 24, 2010.



ABOUT THE FACE

Finalists in the Portrait Gallery's Outwin Boochever Competition (left: *Laura,* photo by Dave Woody, 2007) are on exhibit until August 22, 2010. The winner receives $25,000 and a commission to portray, in any medium, a famous living American.

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ROAD TRIPS

Americans have always been on the move—seeking wealth, adventure or a place to settle down. The traveling exhibit "Journey Stories" tells this history through posters (left: *Millions of Acres,* 1872), photographs and audio clips.

COSMIC CANVAS

Astronaut Alan Bean, the only artist to have walked on another world, adds moon dust to his paintings (left: *First Men—Neil Armstrong,* 2007). His works are at the National Air and Space Museum through January 13.

FAITHFUL STEEDS

An exhibit on the significance of horses in Native American culture opens November 14 at the George Gustav Heye Center in New York. The warrior No Two Horns created this dance stick (c. 1890) to honor his horse killed at Little Big Horn.

BY ABBY CALLARD

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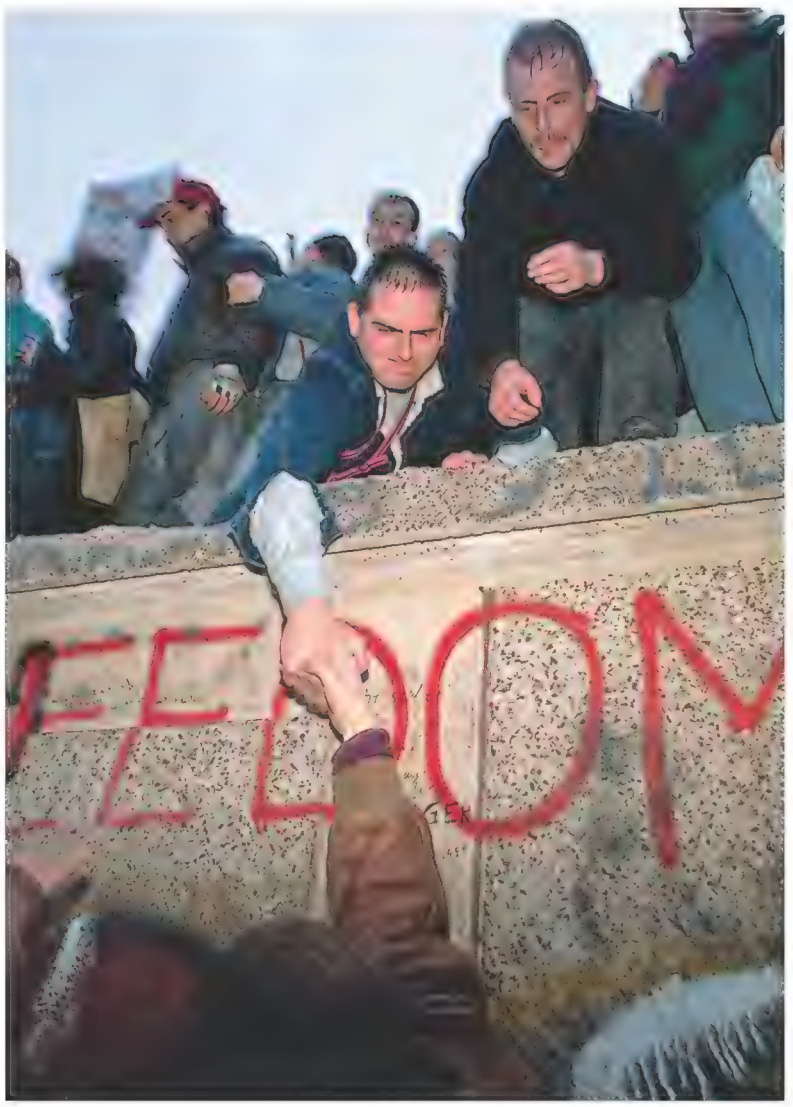
BY ALISON McLEAN



20 YEARS AGO
SOMETHING THERE IS . . .

The Berlin Wall, erected in 1961 to stop emigration from communist East Germany, cracks November 9, 1989, when the country, again facing a mass exodus—this time through its newly democratized Eastern Bloc neighbors—allows two-way travel between East and West Berlin. Thousands cross within hours, and souvenir hunters soon reduce the wall to rubble. Germany reunites the following October.

140 YEARS AGO
FIRST DOWN!

Princeton takes on Rutgers in the first American college football game, November 6, 1869, in New Brunswick, New Jersey. The 25 helmetless men on each team play a game more similar to soccer and rugby than today's football, which will not evolve for several years. "Princeton had the most muscle," Rutgers' newspaper reports, but despite scoring a point against themselves, Rutgers wins 6-4. Some 48 million people will attend 3,493 National Collegiate Athletic Association football games in 2008.

50 YEARS AGO ANSWER MAN

"I was involved, deeply involved, in a deception," Charles Van Doren admits on November 2, 1959, to a House subcommittee investigating the rigging of TV quiz shows about having been fed the answers while a contestant on "Twenty-One." Money was a motivator, he says, but of his $129,000 winnings, "taxes took more than half of it, and the lawyers took a big part." He pleads guilty to a misdemeanor. Van Doren, now 83, goes on to edit *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, and declines a paid consulting job on the 1994 film *Quiz Show*.

150 YEARS AGO BIRDS DO IT

Charles Darwin publishes *On the Origin of Species,* "the chief work of my life," November 22, 1859. In it he marshals 20 years of biological and geological observations to support his theory that the descent—he will not use the word "evolution" until 1872—of all creatures is governed by natural selection, "the preservation of favorable variations, and the rejection of injurious variations." The first printing of 1,250 copies sells out in a day, and *Origin* lays the groundwork for modern scientific thought.

140 YEARS AGO CUT TO THE CHASE

A flotilla of some 45 ships, carrying French Empress Eugenie and other dignitaries, makes the first crossing when the Suez Canal opens to shipping on November 17, 1869. Built over ten years by Frenchman Ferdinand de Lesseps with French and Egyptian backing—and thousands of forced Egyptian laborers—the 101-mile canal, from Port Said on the Mediterranean to Suez on the Red Sea, eliminates a trip around Africa for ships sailing between Europe and Asia. In 1956, Egyptian President Nasser nationalizes the canal, provoking an invasion by Israel, the United Kingdom and France; Egypt retains control of the waterway. Today more than 21,000 ships use it annually.

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Looting Mali

A growing appetite for West African treasures—from Neolithic pottery to 14th-century wood carvings—drives an illegal trade that's depleting the nation's heritage

BY JOSHUA HAMMER

PHOTOGRAPHS BY AARON HUEY

Mali's long history as a sub-Saharan trade route underlies its artistic traditions (in the Dogon region a villager displays ancient ritual figures). A growing appreciation for authentic pieces, smuggled out of the country, fuels demand. According to one Malian official, items as small as a single glass bead plundered from a Neolithic site "can sell for as much as $3,000."

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I'm sitting in the courtyard of a mud-walled compound in a village in central Mali, 40 miles east of the Niger River, waiting for a clandestine meeting to begin. Donkeys, sheep, goats, chickens and ducks wander around the courtyard; a dozen women pound millet, chat in singsong voices and cast shy glances in my direction. My host, whom I'll call Ahmadou Oungoyba, is a slim, prosperous-looking man draped in a purple *bubu*, a traditional Malian gown. He disappears into a storage room, then emerges minutes later carrying several objects wrapped in white cloth. Oungoyba unfolds the first bundle to reveal a Giacometti-like human figure carved out of weathered blond wood. He says the piece, splintered and missing a leg, was found in a cave not far from this village. He gently turns the statuette in his hands. "It's at least 700 years old," he adds.

Oungoyba runs a successful tourist hotel next door to his house; he also does a brisk business selling factory-produced copies of ancient wooden statuettes and other objects to the Western package-tour groups that fill the hotel during the winter high season. But his real money, I've been told, comes from collectors—particularly Europeans—who may pay up to several hundred thousand dollars for antique pieces from villages in the region, in defiance of Malian law. My guide told Oungoyba that I was an American collector interested in purchasing "authentic" Dogon art.

The Dogon, subsistence farmers who hold ancient animist beliefs, are one of central Mali's ethnic groups. In the 15th century, or even earlier, perhaps fleeing a wave of Islamization, they settled along the 100-mile-long Bandiagara Cliffs, which rise just above this village. The Dogon displaced the indigenous Tellem people, who had used caves and

Although Malian law forbids the export of antiquities, artifacts disappear, especially into Niger and Burkina Faso (below). Looters prey in the Bandiagara Cliffs region (right), where many burial sites have been stripped (bottom right). Dogon villagers may legally sell reproduction pieces (center), but illegal archaeological objects may be offered as well. "There are always people who want to sell," says one anonymous dealer.

cliff dwellings as granaries and burial chambers, a practice the Dogon adopted. They built their villages on the rocky slopes below. Today, the majority of the estimated 500,000 Dogon remain purely animist (the rest are Muslims and Christians), their ancient culture based on a triumvirate of gods. Ritual art—used to connect with the spiritual world through prayer and supplication—can still be found in caves and shrines. Dogon doors and shutters, distinctively carved and embellished with images of crocodiles, bats and sticklike human figures, adorn important village structures.

On the porch of his private compound, Oungoyba, a Dogon, unwraps a few additional objects: a pair of ebony statuettes, male and female, that, he says, date back 80 years, which he offers to sell for $16,000; a slender figurine more than 500 years old, available for $20,000. "Check with any one of my clients,"

he says. "They'll tell you I sell only the real antiquities."

Two days earlier, in the village of Hombori, I had met an elderly man who told me that a young Dogon from the village had been cursed by the elders and died suddenly after stealing ancient artifacts from a cave and selling them to a dealer. But endemic poverty, the spread of Islam and cash-bearing dealers such as Oungoyba have persuaded many Dogon to part with their relics. Indeed, Oungoyba says he purchased the 700-year-old human figure, which he offers to me for $9,000, from a committee of village elders, who needed money to make improvements to the local schoolhouse. "There are always people in the villages who want to sell," Oungoyba says. "It's just a question of how much money."

THE VILLAGES OF DOGON COUNTRY are among hundreds of sites across Mali that local people have plundered for cash. The pillaging feeds an insatiable overseas market for Malian antiquities, considered by European, American and Japanese art collectors to be among the finest in Africa. The objects range from the Inland Niger Delta's delicate terracotta statuettes—vestiges of three empires that controlled Saharan trade routes to Europe and the Middle East for some 600 years—to Neolithic pottery to the carved wooden doors and human figurines made by the Dogon.

According to Malian officials, skyrocketing prices for West African art and artifacts, along with the emergence of sophisticated smuggling networks, threaten to wipe out one of Africa's greatest cultural heritages. "These [antiquities dealers] are like narcotraffickers in Mexico," says Ali Kampo, a cultural official in Mopti, a trading town in the Inland Niger Delta. "They're running illegal networks from the poorest villages to the Euro-

The city of Djenné (right: the Great Mosque, rebuilt in 1907) is located in a region rich in ancient mounds. Malian antiquities (bottom right: artifacts seized from pillagers) are considered to be among the finest in Africa. Archaeologist Susan McIntosh (below: at 2,000-year-old Jenne-Jeno) laments the widespread looting: "When you tear objects out of the ground, that's the end of any story we can reconstruct."

pean buyers, and we don't have the resources to stop them."

Mali's antiquities are protected—in principle. The 1970 Unesco Convention signed in Paris obligated member nations to cooperate in "preventing the illicit import, export and transfer of ownership of cultural property." Fifteen years later, Mali passed legislation banning export of what is designated broadly as its cultural patrimony. But the laws have proved easy to circumvent. It's not just poor villagers who have succumbed to temptation. About a decade ago, according to unconfirmed reports, thieves made off with the central door of the Great Mosque of Djenné, a market town in the Inland Niger Delta. The centuries-old wooden door, inlaid with gold, allegedly disappeared while it was being replaced with a facsimile to thwart a plot to steal it. The door, which may well have fetched millions of dollars, was likely smuggled out of the country overland, across the porous border with Burkina Faso.

Antiquity thefts since then have continued apace. In November 2005, officials at France's Montpellier-Méditerranée Airport intercepted 9,500 artifacts from Mali. Days later, French customs agents outside Arles stopped a Moroccan truck bound for Germany packed with fossils from Morocco and statues, pottery and jewels from Mali. In January 2007, authorities at Charles de Gaulle Airport in Paris opened nine suspicious-looking packages marked "handcrafted objects" from Bamako, Mali's capital: inside they found more than 650 bracelets, ax heads, flint stones and

Writer **JOSHUA HAMMER** *lives in Berlin. Photographer* **AARON HUEY** *works from his base in Seattle, Washington.*

P. 36 BOTTOM LEFT: ANNICK MCINTOSH; P. 34 MAP: GUILBERT GATES

stone rings, excavated from Neolithic settlement sites around Ménaka in eastern Mali. Some of these sites date back 8,000 years, when the Sahara was a vast savanna populated by hunter-gatherers. "When you tear these objects out of the ground, that's the end of any story we can reconstruct about that site in the past, what it was used for, who used it," says Susan Keech McIntosh, an archaeologist at Rice University in Houston and a leading authority on ancient West African civilizations. "It's a great loss."

I MET UP with McIntosh in Gao, a parched Niger River town of mud-walled houses and domed tents. The sun was setting over the Sahara when I arrived after a two-day drive across the desert from Timbuktu. McIntosh was there to look in on the excavation of a brick-and-stone complex being conducted by her graduate student, Mamadou Cissé. Locals believe that the site, constructed on top of more ancient structures, was built in the 14th century by Kankou Moussa, ruler of the Mali Empire. I found her seated on the concrete floor of an adobe-and-stucco guesthouse owned by Mali's culture ministry, adjacent to the municipal soccer grounds. With a 40-watt bulb providing the only illumination, she was studying some of the thousands of pottery fragments found at the site. "We've gone down nearly 12 feet, and the pottery appears to go back to around 2,000 years ago," she said, fingering a delicate pale blue shard.

In 1977, McIntosh and her then-husband, Roderick McIntosh, both graduate students in archaeology at the University of California at Santa Barbara, carried out excavations at a 20-foot-high mound that marked the site of Jenne-Jeno, a roughly

2,000-year-old commercial center along the ancient gold-trade route from Ghana and one of the oldest urban centers in sub-Saharan Africa, near present-day Djenné. The couple found pottery and terra-cotta sculptures embedded in clay, along with glass beads from as far away as Southeast Asia. The find was highly publicized: a *Times of London* correspondent reported on the excavations, and the McIntoshes documented their findings in the journal *Archaeology*. Meanwhile, the archaeologists also published a monograph on their work, illustrated by photographs of terra-cotta treasures they uncovered in 1977 and 1980, including a headless torso now on display at Mali's National Museum. A demand for figurines of similar quality was one factor in increased looting in the region, which had begun as far back as the 1960s.

From the 1980s on, she says, thieves ransacked hundreds of archaeological mounds in the Inland Niger Delta and elsewhere. The objects from these sites fetched extraordinary prices: in New York City in 1991, Sotheby's auctioned a 31 1/4- inch-tall Malian terra-cotta ram, from 600 to 1,000 years old, for $275,000—one of the highest prices commanded to that date for Malian statuary. (A Belgian journalist, Michel Brent, later reported that a Malian counterfeiter had added a fake body and hind legs to the ram, deceiving the world's African art experts. Brent also charged that the piece had been pillaged from the village of Dary in 1986.) In another notorious case, in 1997, then French President Jacques Chirac returned a terra-cotta ram he had received as a gift after Mali provided evidence that it had been looted from the Tenenkou region.

WITH A FIERCE WIND BLOWING from the desert, I venture beyond Gao to observe examples of the systematic

For Dogon villagers, artifacts represent a connection to living tradition (left: heirloom masks, worn in funerary rites, are then returned to sacred caves). Samuel Sidibé (bottom far left), director of the National Museum of Mali, oversees a treasure house of objects, new and old, that "belong to the Malian heritage" (below, from left: c. 1500s seated clay figurine; a mother-and-child sculpture less than 50 years old).

looting in the region. Mamadou Cissé, McIntosh's graduate student, leads me across an archaeological mound known as Gao-Saney. Grains of sand nip at our faces as we trudge across the 25- to 30-foot-high mound, crunching shards of ancient pottery beneath our feet. Below us, on the flood plain, I can make out the long dry bed of the Telemsi River, which likely drew settlers to this site 1,400 years ago. What commands my attention, however, are hundreds of holes, as deep as ten feet, that pockmark this mound. "Watch out," says Cissé, hopscotching past a trough gouged out of the sand. "The looters have dug everywhere."

Between A.D. 610 and 1200, Gao-Saney served as a trading center controlled by the Dia dynasty. A decade ago, Western and Malian archaeologists began digging in the sandy soil and uncovered fine pottery, copper bracelets and bead necklaces strung with glass and semiprecious stones. Looters, however, had already burrowed into the soft ground and sold what they found to international dealers in Niger. Several years ago, Mali's culture ministry hired a guard to watch the site around the clock. "By then it was too late," Cissé told me, surveying the moonscape. "*Les pilleurs* had stripped it clean."

The late Boubou Gassama, director of cultural affairs in the Gao region, had told me that looting had spread up the Telemsi Valley to remote sites virtually impossible to protect. In October 2004, local tipsters told him about a gang of pilleurs who were active in a desert area outside Gao; Gassama brought in the gendarmerie and conducted a predawn sting operation that netted 17 looters, who were making off with beads, arrowheads, vases and other objects from the Neolithic era and later. "They were mostly looking for glass beads, which they can sell in Morocco and Mauritania for as much as $3,000 apiece," Gassama had said. The men, all of them Tuareg nomads from around Timbuktu, served six months in the Gao prison. Since then, Cissé reports, locals have created "brigades of surveillance" to help protect the sites.

The Malian government has made modest progress combating antiquities theft. Former President Alpha Oumar Konaré, an archaeologist who held office between 1992 and

View more photos of Mali's rich cultural heritage at Smithsonian.com/mali

Preservationist Ali Kampo (left: in the village of Mopti, where he is a cultural official) compares antiquities smugglers to "narcotraffickers in Mexico." Although thieves operate across wide areas (above: the border region with Niger), innovative policing projects have virtually eliminated looting in certain locations, including the important ancient site of Jenne-Jeno.

2002, established a network of cultural missions across the Inland Niger Delta, responsible for policing sites and raising awareness of the need to preserve Mali's heritage. The government also beefed up security at important mounds. McIntosh, who usually returns to Mali every couple of years, says Konaré's program has almost eliminated looting in Jenne-Jeno and the surrounding area.

Samuel Sidibé, director of Mali's National Museum in Bamako, has helped Mali's customs officials prevent cultural

heritage material from leaving the country. Regulations require anyone seeking to export Malian art to submit the objects themselves—as well as a set of photographs—to museum officials. Sidibé and other experts issue export certificates only if they determine that the objects are not, in fact, cultural patrimony. Only two months earlier, Sidibé told me, he had been able to block a shipment of centuries-old terra cottas. Shady exporters are furious about the regulations, he adds, because they make it more difficult for them to pass off copies as authentic artifacts, and prices have nose-dived.

Oungoyba, the illegal antiquities dealer, scoffs at the regulations. I asked him if I would be able to smuggle Dogon sculptures out of the country. "*Pas de problème*," he says, flashing a small smile. Oungoyba says that he'll pack up whatever I purchase in a secured wood crate, and he instructs me to undervalue the purchase by 95 percent. Bamako International Airport, he says, can be tricky; he advises his clients to carry their purchases overland to Niger. Malian customs officials at the border usually can't be bothered to open the crate. "Just tell them that you spent $100 on it as a gift for your family, and nobody will ask questions," he assures me, adding that suspicious officials can be bought off. Once I've crossed into Niger, he continues, I'll be home free. The Niger government has been lax about enforcing the Unesco treaty obliging signatories to cooperate in combating antiquities theft. Oungoyba insists that his black-market trade helps the economy of the destitute Dogon region. But others say dealers and buyers hide behind such arguments to justify the damage they're inflicting on the culture. "They claim they're doing good things—building hospitals, spreading money around," Ali Kampo, the cultural official in Mopti, tells me. "But in the end, they're doing a disservice to humanity."

PP. 40-41 JORDI CAMI

The invaders are invisible until late summer, when adults emerge and infest more trees (researchers in Worcester search hardwoods and mark them for destruction).

INVASION OF THE LONGHORNS

In leafy Worcester, Massachusetts, authorities are battling to contain an invasive beetle that is poised to devastate the great hardwood forests of New England

BY PETER ALSOP

PHOTOGRAPHS BY MAX AGUILERA-HELLWEG

ON A PLEASANT JULY EVENING Donna Massie steered her car into her driveway at the bottom of Whitmarsh Avenue in Worcester, Massachusetts. Her husband, Kevin, and his friend Jesse were huddled beside Jesse's car, a gold Hyundai Sonata, and were peering closely at one of its doors. They were staring not at a dent but at a striking black-and-white beetle, about the width of Donna's pinkie and half as long, with bluish legs and two banded antennas that curved back over the length of its body like the whiskers of a catfish.

The beetle gently probed the surface of the car with its forelegs. None of the three was much of a bug person, and Donna was decidedly anti-bug, stipulating a death-to-insect policy in her house. Still, the beetle transfixed her. It was larger than any she'd ever encountered, and with its otherworldly colors it was almost beautiful. Before the creature whirled its wings and flew away, Massie and her husband decided that it must be a June bug, albeit a freakish sort.

The insect might have escaped further notice, and evaded authorities altogether, if the Massies had not hosted a cookout two days later in their backyard, where others began to notice the curious beetles. They were hard to miss, creeping along the trunks of the maple trees that fringed the Massies' yard. Their black wing casings stood out starkly

against the silver bark. One beetle planted itself on Kevin's pant leg and had to be pried loose. Then Donna noticed something unnerving. Near the base of one maple, she found a beetle sprinkled with sawdust, its head submerged in a dime-size hole in the tree's trunk. It seemed to be eating its way inward.

The following morning, Donna searched the Internet and identified her backyard visitor as an Asian longhorned beetle, also known by the abbreviation ALB. Her search also turned up a pest alert from the state of Florida that warned of the dangers posed by the insect. Donna began leaving messages with various agricultural authorities.

Patty Douglass, who works for the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), was in her office in Wallingford, Connecticut, 75 miles south of Worcester, when Donna Massie's call came through. In her position as the plant health director for Connecticut, Massachusetts and Rhode Island, Douglass regularly fields phone calls from gardeners, landscapers and amateur entomologists who believe they've encountered one of the nonnative insects on the USDA's threat list. Nearly all of these calls prove to be in error, as the insect universe is almost incomprehensibly large and varied, and mistakes in identification are easily made. The beetle order alone contains some 350,000 known species; by comparison, the total number of bird species is roughly 10,000.

Massie took a photograph of the beetle with her cellphone and sent it in. The portrait was pixelated, but the beetle's speckled black-and-white abdomen and its telltale antennas were unmistakable. Within 24 hours of receiving the image, Douglass and Jennifer Forman Orth, an invasive species ecologist with the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources, were standing beside Massie in her backyard, staring up at her trees. Douglass spotted one of the insects, confirming with her own eyes a scenario that she and others at the USDA had long feared—an ALB outbreak in New England. She grabbed Massie's arm. "Oh, God," she said. "They're really here."

Every known infestation of the Asian longhorned beetle in the United States has been found by an alert citizen (Donna Massie in Worcester).

FOR MOST OF ITS HISTORY, the Asian longhorned beetle occupied a small, largely unremarkable niche in the forests of China, Korea and Japan. It was not known as a serious pest. In the 1960s and 1970s, however, the Chinese government began to plant enormous windbreaks of millions of trees in its northern provinces in response to erosion and deforestation. These windbreaks were composed almost entirely of poplar trees, which mature quickly and tolerate the arid, cold climate of northern China. As it happens, the poplar is a tree favored by the ALB, along with maple, birch, elm and several other hardwoods. The beetle is unique among invasive forest pests for attacking such a broad array of hosts, which is partly why it is so dangerous.

Adult beetles feed on leaves, twigs and young bark. Females deposit anywhere from 35 to 90 eggs, one at a time, in pits they dig in the bark. When the eggs hatch, ALB larvae bore into the cambium, the tissue that ferries the tree's nutrients, and then they move into the heartwood. Over several years, this tunneling chokes off a tree's supply of nutrients and kills it—a death by a thousand cuts.

In the 1980s, as China's poplar forests matured, the ALB population exploded. Within a few years, hundreds of millions of trees were infested, and the Chinese government had to cut tens of thousands of acres of forest to prevent the beetle's further trespass.

Meanwhile, China, along with the rest of the world, experienced a surge in foreign trade. Since 1970, global sea trade has tripled, and today more than 90 percent of the world's goods travel at least one leg of their journey by ship. The United States went from importing 8 million sea containers in 1980 to more than 30 million in 2000. And most of those products—diapers, televisions, umbrellas—are packed in crates or on pallets made of wood. In the 1980s, pallets of infested poplar began to leave Chinese ports, carrying Asian longhorned beetle larvae. A stowaway on the global shipping network, the insect came into nearly instant contact with warehouses across the world.

In August 1996, Ingram Carner, a landlord in Brooklyn,

P. 43 JOHN FOWLER

Patty Douglass (in her USDA office) had long dreaded a beetle infestation in New England. "Oh, God," she said in Worcester. "They're really here."

New York, noticed that the Norway maples on his property were full of strange perforations, each slightly thicker than a pencil and so perfectly spherical they looked as if they'd been drilled. When the culprit was identified, and the USDA realized the nature of the threat—a beetle with the capacity to destroy numerous native hardwoods—the agency began cutting down thousands of infested trees and chipping them. That's the best way to ensure the beetle's demise; insecticides don't reach it once it has burrowed past the cambium, although they might protect unafflicted trees. In addition, the USDA established a quarantine around much of New York City, prohibiting anyone from transporting wood that could host the beetle. The restriction is still in place. In the 13 years since the initial outbreak, authorities have documented the ALB in Queens, Staten Island, northern New Jersey and on Long Island. The work of eradicating the beetle from the New York City area continues.

Infestations have also been discovered in Chicago and Toronto. The beetles have been intercepted in dozens of ports and warehouses across the country, from Mobile, Alabama, to Bellingham, Washington. But the discovery of an ALB outbreak in Worcester marked an ominous turn. While previous infestations were confined to urban areas with relatively thin tree cover, Worcester—a city of 175,000 people 40 miles west of Boston—is full of trees, most of them hardwoods. More troubling, the city sits at the southern edge of the great Northern hardwood forest, millions of contiguous acres stretching to Canada and the Great Lakes. If the beetle escaped into such a forest, it could prove the most devastating arboreal pest we've ever known, occasioning more damage than Dutch elm disease, gypsy moths and chestnut blight combined. It could change the face of the New England woods.

IN THE BOWELS OF THE Massachusetts National Guard Armory in Worcester, in a cramped conference room that serves as a makeshift headquarters, Clint McFarland is staring at a four-foot-wide city map tacked to the wall. The words "Regulated Area" are printed on it. McFarland traces the map with his fingers and reads the names of streets into a cellphone, which is never far from his hands and beeps and barks at him all day long. The room is covered with maps, each articulating a different set of beetle data. Along with the phones that are ringing constantly and the stream of uniformed personnel in and out of the room, the maps lend the impression of a command post hastily assembled on a battlefield.

McFarland, 34, wears his hair in a ponytail, giving him a look that seems slightly at odds with the gold badge emblazoned on his jacket identifying him as an agricultural enforcement officer for the federal government. He has

The inch-long beetle, with antennas about twice that long (left and center), lays eggs in bark. Its larvae burrow deep into trees and eat the tissues called xylem and phloem that transport water and nutrients. In Worcester (right: the city is in the southeast corner of this satellite image), the beetles are proliferating at the edge of a hardwood forest that covers most of New England.

BOTTOM: KENNETH R. LAW / USDA; MICHAEL SMITH / USDA; U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

worked for the Animal and Plant Inspection Service (APHIS), the USDA division that deals with agricultural pests, for eight years, all of that time on the Asian longhorned beetle. In October 2008, his supervisors handed him the Worcester assignment. When I first met with him, he had been on the job a little over a month and even then showed signs of exhaustion, with red-rimmed eyes and a rasp in his voice. Stopping the beetle in Worcester was proving more difficult than he or anyone else had first imagined.

Within days of Donna Massie's telephone call, authorities from APHIS arrived in Worcester to orchestrate a containment plan with state and local officials. A state order was issued forbidding the transportation of all wood from host tree species and all firewood out of a 17-square-mile area in the heart of the city. APHIS assembled several ground survey teams to seek evidence of the beetle: exit holes, egg deposits, sawdust, and sap leaking from wounded trees. The service wanted to understand how wide the infestation was, and how serious. What they found alarmed them.

The life cycle of the ALB is roughly a year, nine months of which is spent buried in wood. While adult beetles are serviceable fliers, they tend not to move very fast. Beetles will often inhabit one tree for many generations until it is nearly dead. A quick way to gauge the length of an infestation is to look at the trees themselves: the more holes they have, the longer the beetles have been around. On street after street in Worcester, survey teams found trees riddled with holes, as if they'd been fired upon with a shotgun. In some cases, the trees were so weakened they'd begun to lose their limbs—victims of a long and sustained attack. It soon became clear that the beetle had found its way to the city a decade ago or longer.

On the day I caught up with him, McFarland was organizing the deployment of more than 20 U.S. Forest Service smoke jumpers, forest firefighters from Western states, who had been brought in to climb through Worcester's trees to search for signs of infestation. Because the beetle first attacks a tree's crown, spotters on the ground may have difficulty detecting the insect; even the smoke jumpers, swinging from ropes and clambering over limbs, manage to identify only about 70 percent of infected trees. Complicating matters for McFarland, the quarantine had been expanded to 62 square miles, and this area encompassed more than 600,000 ALB-susceptible trees, each of which had to be inspected. Ten thousand trees had so far been examined, and more than a third showed evidence of beetles and would have to be destroyed before the summer, when the larvae would transform into voracious flying insects. Worcester was the worst ALB infestation the country had seen.

"I think eradication is really possible," says Clint McFarland (in Worcester, with a beetle on a red maple). "And we don't have a choice, do we?"

After McFarland dispatched the smoke jumpers, he drove me to the site of the oldest infestation, located in a stretch of industrial land bordered by a highway on the west and a residential neighborhood on the east. We were accompanied by Ken Gooch of the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation. It was a bitterly cold day, one of the coldest on record in November in that part of the state, and the men tramped through the underbrush with their shoulders raised against the wind and their hands thrust in their jacket pockets. McFarland took occasional furious puffs on a cigarette. We walked 50 yards and then Gooch stopped suddenly and pointed at a tree stump. The exposed wood was raw, a pinkish yellow.

"When did that come down?" asked McFarland, raising his voice above the rush of passing highway traffic.

Gooch shook his head. "I don't know."

The men walked around the stump. McFarland stared down at some sawdust and let out a sigh, as if to say, "What next?" The now missing tree had been identified as infested, as had almost all the maples in that part of town. But

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PETER ALSOP *writes about science and the environment.*
MAX AGUILERA-HELLWEG *was the photographer for "Diamonds on Demand" in the June 2008 issue of* SMITHSONIAN.

the cutting and chipping work was not supposed to have begun; whoever had removed the tree was not working for APHIS. The wood was, in effect, a ticking time bomb. Contaminated with beetle larvae, it could become a source for yet another outbreak elsewhere.

Standing beside the two men as they considered the whereabouts of a single tree in a city of trees, I began to grasp the immense challenge of trying to stop an insect from having its way in the world. I thought about all the years the beetle had been in Worcester before it was discovered, years in which wood was moved freely out of the city, in the back of a landscaper's truck, perhaps, or as firewood to be stacked beside someone's cabin in the forests of New Hampshire or Vermont or Maine. I remembered something I had read about the beetle: Chinese farmers, who had watched the insect march across the northern provinces, referred to it as the "forest fire without smoke."

IT IS NO SURPRISE that the beetle's escape from China came via trade. Invasive species have traveled undetected in the ballast of ships, in nursery plants, in crates of fruit, in old tires, even in the wheel wells of airplanes. Life likes to travel, and in the era of globalization it travels at a pace never before known, covering distances never before possible. Thousands of introduced species now prey upon or outcompete native species in the United States. The costs of this ecological upheaval, even in purely economic terms, is staggering—a 2005 Cornell University study put the damage from invasive species at $120 billion per year in the United States alone.

Not long after the Brooklyn infestation was discovered in 1996, the USDA began requiring that solid-wood packing material—the stuff used for shipping crates and pallets—be fumigated or heat-treated to kill the larvae of forest pests. These regulations were applied first in 1998 to Chinese imports and then in 2005 to those from all other nations. The regulations have reduced the entry of the ALB into the country, although, even today, dozens of the beetles are intercepted annually in ports nationwide, and other avenues of entry, such as live plant imports, remain. The protocols established by the government after the Brooklyn outbreak—quarantines, inspections and the destruction of infested trees—have largely succeeded, in part because the beetles disperse slowly on their own.

We have no choice but to fight the insect. The costs of not doing so are enormous—one USDA study puts the potential ALB damage in the United States at more than $650 billion, and that's accounting only for trees in municipalities, not on forested lands. The federal government has spent in excess of $250 million on ALB eradication efforts thus far, and more than $24 million in Worcester. Each known outbreak—in New York, New Jersey, Chicago and Worcester—was discovered in a densely populated area, by an alert citizen, after years of infestation. But what if other infestations are taking place out of sight—near a warehouse in a small town in New Hampshire, perhaps, or behind a lumberyard in upstate New York?

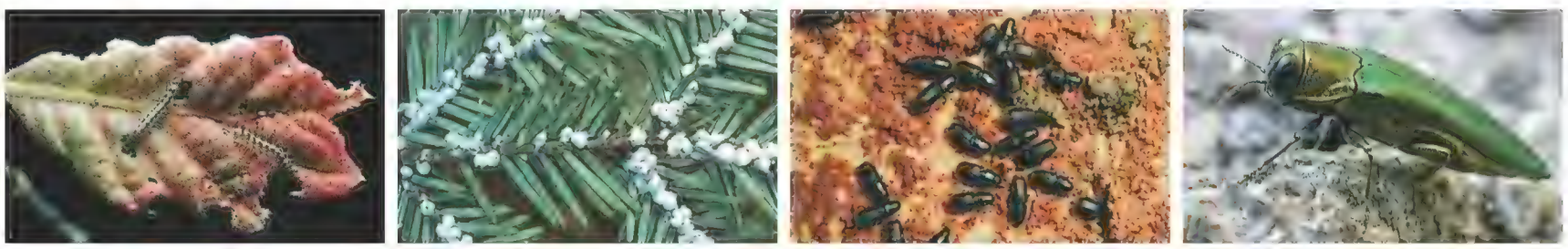
I asked E. Richard Hoebeke, a Cornell University entomologist who has studied the Asian longhorned beetle as long as anyone in the United States, about possible undetected infestations. He talked about the many years the beetle had been invading before it came to our attention. He spoke of the overwhelming number of shipping containers pouring into the country.

"Are there other infestations?" he said. "I'm certain of it. Worcester won't be the last."

Concerned that the beetle might find its way into the Northern hardwoods, I visited the ecologist David Foster, director of the Harvard Forest, a 3,000-acre parcel in central Massachusetts that is the site of long-term ecological research. How might the beetle change the New England landscape? To ask that question, as it turns out, is to invite others—questions about what shaped the land in the first place. By way of explanation, Foster took me into the woods.

Much of the Harvard Forest, like more than half of New England, was cleared by farmers in the 18th and 19th centuries and later abandoned. Not far into our walk we passed a crumbling stone wall that cut a straight line through the woods. It was nearing dusk, and a skin of ice covered the snow. Foster, a tall man with dark hair and the ruddy complexion of someone who spends a lot of time outdoors, took big, crunching steps along the trail. We passed a stand of

"ARE THERE OTHER INFESTATIONS?" ASKED E. RICHARD HOEBEKE, A CORNELL UNIVERSITY ENTOMOLOGIST WHO HAS STUDIED THE ASIAN LONGHORNED BEETLE. "I'M CERTAIN OF IT. WORCESTER WON'T BE THE LAST."



Invasive species have disrupted American forests. In the past century, chestnut blight killed all but a few chestnut trees in the Eastern forest. Today (from left), European gypsy moths (caterpillars), released in the 1860s, attack oaks and other trees; hemlock woolly adelgids (egg sacs) eat hemlocks; goldenhaired bark beetles infest pines; and emerald ash borers destroy ash.

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pines and ducked under some fallen snags, and then we came to level land populated by maples and birch. "Beetle food," said Foster, wryly.

It would seem to be our poor luck that so much of New England contains habitat so well suited to the ALB, but, as Foster pointed out, that is at least in part of our own making. In the mid-19th century, New England's settlers began to abandon their farms—lured by cities and by the opening of the West—and their fields returned to forest. Trees such as birch and maple and pine spread first and farthest, on land that once hosted more hemlock, beech and oak, which are not susceptible to the beetle. "Most people walk through these woods and don't see the human impact," Foster said. "But if we compare the vegetation of these forests in 1600 with the vegetation of today, we see huge changes. There's a tremendous increase in species like red maple, which is favored by the beetle."

We have shaped the forest in other ways, too. Chestnut trees once accounted for perhaps a quarter of the Eastern forest. But they were wiped out by the 1950s by an Asian fungus brought here on Japanese nursery stock. A shipment of logs from Europe in 1931 introduced Dutch elm disease, another fungal blight, which infected elms across the Northeast. The European gypsy moth, let loose in Massachusetts in the 1860s, has ravaged oaks and other trees, and the hemlock woolly adelgid, an Asian insect introduced to the East Coast in 1951, has caused widespread mortality in hemlocks. Another invasive Asian beetle, the emerald ash borer, is destroying millions of ash trees in the Midwest and Middle Atlantic. The cumulative effect of these and other pests and pathogens is a more homogenous forest, and one that is more vulnerable to invasion. "We're setting ourselves up for more catastrophe," Foster said.

E. Richard Hoebeke (with invasive beetle specimens at Cornell) says as many as 600 other high-risk insect species could invade the United States.

Forests are becoming even more fragile as the climate warms and the range of native forest pests expands. In the Rocky Mountains, hundreds of thousands of acres of aspen have begun to succumb to the combined pressures of drought, disease, warmer weather and insect predation—a phenomenon termed "sudden aspen decline." Pine trees there are dying in even greater numbers: mountain pine beetles, aided by drought and mild winters, are laying waste to millions of acres.

As the evening grew dark, Foster and I turned back toward his office. We stopped at the edge of the forest, and we could see barns and a snow-covered field and the distant lights of a farmhouse. From where we stood, the Worcester outbreak was less than 40 miles away. I wondered what the beetle might do were it to make it here to the Harvard Forest, which harbors some of the oldest woods in all of Massachusetts.

"Even if it comes through here," Foster said, "there'll still be a forest. It may not be the same, but the forest will continue." He kicked at the snow with the toe of one boot and looked out over the field. "It is such a generalist, though," he said of the beetle. "It likes so many trees. I don't know. It really is one of the worst nightmares."

ON THE NIGHT OF DECEMBER 11, 2008, a freezing rain fell over Worcester, and in the hours before dawn Clint McFarland woke several times to the patter of sleet against his window. In the morning, when he stepped outside, he hardly recognized the city. Under a burden of ice, trees had fallen haphazardly onto cars and houses. Limbs littered the streets; nearly half the roads in Donna Massie's neighborhood were impassable. The ice storm, the worst in a decade, had blanketed much of the Northeast, leaving nearly a million homes and businesses without power, injecting an unforeseeable element of chaos into an already complicated beetle eradication effort.

Contractors up and down the East Coast, from as far south as Florida, began arriving in the city in pursuit of debris-removal work, many of them unaware of the ordinance against removing wood from a quarantined area. In the days after the storm, several trucks were seen carting tree limbs away, despite patrols by environmental police. "We know that wood has been moved out of the city," McFarland told

Find the country's most dangerous beetles at Smithsonian.com/ALB

Compared with 1600, today's Northeastern forests have more trees the invaders like. David Foster (in the Harvard woods) calls them "beetle food."

me when I caught up with him the following week. "That's our paramount concern right now. It can't happen again."

Driving to a meeting of town officials, McFarland looked beleaguered. He'd been working nearly nonstop for days, and weighing upon him was the thought that he would have to tell his wife he was going to miss Christmas. The ice storm, meanwhile, had pushed back plans to begin cutting and chipping trees, and the tally of infested trees in the quarantine area had risen to nearly 6,000.

We passed streets lined with shoulder-high stacks of branches. On one block, nearly every tree along the road had been marked for ALB-related removal with an ominous red splotch. I asked McFarland if he thought much about what would happen if he failed in Worcester. He laughed and admitted that he did. "But it's in my nature. I have a fear of failure." He smiled. "Look, we can do this. I've been studying this beetle for years and I think eradication is really possible, and that's hard to say about most insects. And we don't have a choice, do we? There is so much at stake. If it hits the Northeastern hardwood forest, you're looking at the maple industry, timber, tourism. It's huge. We really can't fail."

A year later, there is reason for some optimism. The government's containment efforts have so far succeeded. More than 25,000 trees were felled within Worcester city limits in 2009. The area of quarantine around the city has expanded slightly, from 62 to 66 square miles. No new ALB infestations have been discovered outside the city center.

AT THE HEIGHT OF THE CRISIS in the winter of 2008-2009, log loaders and bucket trucks were arriving by the hour from out of state, and chain saw crews were removing wood from backyards and rooftops and utility lines. Given the concentration of human effort marshaled against a single insect, it was tempting to think that this was the only battle against an invasive species. Yet in California, Virginia, Michigan and Florida—to name just a few affected states—the same drama was unfolding, if with different characters: the emerald ash borer and the hemlock woolly adelgid, sudden oak death and the citrus canker. Beyond our borders, more organisms are poised to invade. On average, we bring a major new agricultural pest into the country every three or four years. Cornell's Hoebeke told me that perhaps as many as 600 of the world's high-risk insect pests were not yet established in the United States, any one of which might prove as virulent as the ALB. He was particularly concerned about the Asian citrus longhorned beetle, which could devastate the country's citrus and apple orchards.

Sitting with McFarland in a car in Worcester listening to the thrum of logging activity, I was struck by what a strange confluence of events had brought the beetle to Worcester, an ocean away from its native range. People are largely to blame, of course. But there seemed an accidental ingenuity in the way the beetle had hitched itself, undetected, to the one species capable of taking it everywhere. I asked McFarland if he ever found something to admire in the Asian longhorned beetle, despite all the trouble it had caused.

"Oh, yes," he said. "I admire all insects. People say that insects will inherit the earth, but entomologists know better. The earth already belongs to the insects. They were here long before us and they've taken over every niche. They're in nearly every inch of soil, and they're in the atmosphere. We wouldn't be here without them—without pollination and decomposition. The earth is theirs. We're just trying to share it for a while."

"THERE IS SO MUCH AT STAKE. IF IT HITS THE NORTHEASTERN HARDWOOD FOREST," SAYS CLINT MCFARLAND. "YOU'RE LOOKING AT THE MAPLE INDUSTRY, TIMBER, TOURISM. IT'S HUGE. WE REALLY CAN'T FAIL."

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The Battle *of* Arlington

The Union seized Gen. Robert E. Lee's home without firing a shot—then fought for decades to hold what would become the nation's most hallowed ground

BY ROBERT M. POOLE

One afternoon in May 1861, a young Union Army officer went rushing into the mansion that commanded the hills across the Potomac River from Washington, D.C. "You must pack up all you value immediately and send it off in the morning," Lt. Orton Williams told Mary Custis Lee, wife of Robert E. Lee, who was away mobilizing Virginia's military forces as the country hurtled toward the bloodiest war in its history.

Mary Lee dreaded the thought of abandoning Arlington, the 1,100-acre estate she had inherited from her father, George Washington Parke Custis, upon his death in 1857. Custis, the grandson of Martha Washington, had been adopted by George Washington when Custis' father died in 1781. Beginning in 1802, as the new nation's capital took form across the river, Custis started building Arlington, his showplace mansion. Probably modeled after the Temple of Hephaestus in Athens, the columned house floated among the Virginia hills as if it had been there forever, peering down upon the half-finished capital at its feet. When Custis died, Arlington passed to Mary Lee, his only surviving child, who had grown up, married and raised seven children and buried her parents there. In correspondence, her husband referred to the place as "our dear home," the spot "where my attachments are more strongly placed than at any other place in the world." If possible, his wife felt an even stronger attachment to the property.

On April 12, 1861, Confederate troops had fired on the federal garrison at Fort Sumter, South Carolina, prompting a number of states from the Deep South to join in rebellion. President Abraham Lincoln, newly installed in the White House, called up 75,000 troops to defend the capi-

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BRUCE DALE

No. 288.—**ARLINGTON HOUSE,**
East Front. June 28, 1864.

The house at Arlington (above: in 1864) was the centerpiece of a 1,100-acre estate inherited by Mary Custis Lee (right: in 1830); her husband (far right: in 1864) wrote that "my attachments are more strongly placed [there] than at any other place in the world." But starting in 1864, the property was transformed into a military cemetery (opposite: in 2007).

tal. As the spring unfolded, the forces drifted into Washington, set up camp in the unfinished Capitol building, patrolled the city's thoroughfares and scrutinized the Virginia hills for signs of trouble. Although officially uncommitted to the Confederacy, Virginia was expected to join the revolt. When that happened, Union troops would have to take control of Arlington, where the heights offered a perfect platform for artillery—key to the defense or subjugation of the capital. Once the war began, Arlington was easily won. But then it became the prize in a legal and bureaucratic battle that would continue long after the guns fell silent at Appomattox in 1865. The federal government was still wrestling the Lee family for control of the property in 1882, by which time it had been transformed into Arlington National Cemetery, the nation's most hallowed ground.

Orton Williams was not only Mary Lee's cousin and a suitor of her daughter Agnes but also private secretary to General in Chief Winfield Scott of the Union Army.

Working in Scott's office, he had no doubt heard about the Union Army's plans for seizing Arlington, which accounts for his sudden appearance there. That May night, Mrs. Lee supervised some frantic packing by a few of the family's 196 slaves, who boxed the family silver for transfer to Richmond, crated George Washington's and G.W.P. Custis' papers and secured General Lee's files. After organizing her escape, Mary Lee tried to get some sleep, only to be awakened just after dawn by Williams: the Army's advance upon Arlington had been delayed, he said, though it was inevitable. She lingered for several days, sitting for hours in her favorite roost, an arbor south of the mansion. "I never saw the country more beautiful, perfectly radiant," she wrote to her husband. "The yellow jasmine in full bloom and perfum-

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS (2); ARLINGTON HOUSE, THE ROBET E. LEE MEMORIAL

ing the air; but a death like stillness prevails everywhere."

The general, stranded at a desk in Richmond, feared for his wife's safety. "I am very anxious about you," he had written her on April 26. "You have to move, & make arrangements to go to some point of safety. . . . War is inevitable & there is no telling when it will burst around you."

By this time, he almost certainly knew that Arlington would be lost. A newly commissioned brigadier general in the Confederate Army, he had made no provision to hold it by force, choosing instead to concentrate his troops some 20 miles southwest, near a railroad junction at Manassas, Virginia. Meanwhile, Northern newspapers such as the *New York Daily Tribune* trained their big guns on him—labeling him a traitor for resigning his colonel's commission in the Union Army to go south "in the footsteps of Benedict Arnold!"

The rhetoric grew only more heated with the weather. Former Army comrades who had admired Lee turned against him. None was more outspoken than Brig. Gen. Montgomery C. Meigs, a fellow West Point graduate who had served amicably under Lee in the engineer corps but

Union officers were initially protective of Lee's mansion (above: Brig. Gen. Irvin McDowell and his staff c. 1861). But Brig. Gen. Montgomery C. Meigs (left) saw Lee as a traitor. When Meigs was charged with finding a place to bury the rising numbers of dead (right: hospital tents in Washington, D.C., 1862-65; below: fallen soldiers at Gettysburg, 1863), he looked toward Arlington.

Of the former Army comrades who turned against Lee, none was more outspoken than Meigs, a fellow West Pointer who had served amicably under Lee in the engineer corps. The Virginian, he wrote, "should be put formally out of the way . . . by sentence of death."

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS (4)

now considered him an insurgent. "No man who ever took the oath to support the Constitution as an officer of our army or navy . . . should escape without loss of all his goods & civil rights & expatriation," Meigs wrote to his father. He urged that Lee as well as Gen. Joseph E. Johnston, who also had resigned from the federal Army to join the enemy, and Confederate President Jefferson Davis "should be put formally out of the way if possible by sentence of death [and] executed if caught."

When Johnston resigned, Meigs had taken his job as quartermaster general, which required him to equip, feed and transport a rapidly growing Union Army—a task for which Meigs proved supremely suited. Vain, energetic, vindictive and exceptionally capable, he would back up his belligerent talk in the months and years ahead. His own mother conceded that the youthful Meigs had been "high tempered, unyielding, tyrannical . . . and very persevering

in pursuit of anything he wants." Fighting for control of Arlington, he would become one of Lee's most implacable foes.

By mid-May, even Mary Lee had to concede that she could not avoid the impending conflict. "I would have greatly preferred remaining at home & having my children around me," she wrote to one of her daughters, "but as it would greatly increase your Father's anxiety I shall go." She made an eerily accurate prediction: "I fear that this will be the scene of conflict & my beautiful home endeared by a thousand associations may become a field of carnage."

She took a final turn in the garden, entrusted the keys to Selina Gray, a slave, and followed her husband's path down the estate's long, winding driveway. Like many others on both sides, she believed that the war would pass quickly.

ON MAY 23, 1861, the voters of Virginia approved an ordinance of secession by a ratio of more than six to one. Within hours, columns of Union forces streamed through Washington and made for the Potomac. At precisely 2 a.m. on May 24, some 14,000 troops began crossing the river into Virginia. They advanced in the moonlight on steamers, on foot and on horseback, in swarms so thick that James Parks, a Lee family slave watching from Arlington, thought they looked "like bees a-coming."

The undefended estate changed hands without a whimper. When the sun rose that morning, the place was teeming with men in blue. They established a tidy village of tents, stoked fires for breakfast and scuttled over the mansion's broad portico with telegrams from the War Office. The surrounding hills were soon lumpy with breastworks, and massive oaks were felled to clear a line of fire for artillery. "All that the best military skill could suggest to strengthen the position has been done," *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper* reported, "and the whole line of defenses on Arlington Heights may be said to be completed and capable of being held against any attacking force."

The attack never materialized, but the war's impact was seen, felt and heard at Arlington in a thousand ways. Union forces denuded the estate's forest and absconded with souvenirs from the mansion. They built cabins and set up a cavalry remount station by the river. The Army also took charge of the newly freed slaves who flocked into Washington after Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation of 1863. When the government was unable to accommodate the former slaves in the capital, where thousands fell sick and died, one of Meigs' officers proposed that they be settled at Arlington, "on the lands recently abandoned by rebel leaders." A sprawling Freedmen's Village of 1,500 sprang to life on the estate, complete with new frame houses, schools, churches and farmlands on which former slaves grew food for the Union's war effort. "One sees more than poetic justice in the fact that its rich lands, so long the domain of the great general of the rebellion, now afford labor and support to hundreds of enfranchised slaves," a visiting journalist would report in the *Washington Independent* in January 1867.

As the war had heated up in June 1862, Congress passed a law that empowered commissioners to assess and collect taxes on real estate in "insurrectionary districts." The statute was meant not only to raise revenue for the war, but also to punish turncoats like Lee. If the taxes were not paid in person, commissioners were authorized to sell the land.

Authorities levied a tax of $92.07 on the Lees' estate that year. Mary Lee, stuck in Richmond because of the fighting and her deteriorating health, dispatched her cousin Philip R. Fendall to pay the bill. But when Fendall presented himself before the commissioners in Alexandria, they said they

would accept money only from Mary Lee herself. Declaring the property in default, they put it up for sale.

The auction took place on January 11, 1864, a day so cold that blocks of ice stopped boat traffic on the Potomac. The sole bid came from the federal government, which offered $26,800, well under the estate's assessed value of $34,100. According to the certificate of sale, Arlington's new owner intended to reserve the property "for Government use, for war, military, charitable and educational purposes."

Appropriating the homestead was perfectly in keeping with the views of Lincoln, Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton, Gen. William T. Sherman and Montgomery Meigs, all of whom believed in waging total war to bring the rebellion to a speedy conclusion. "Make them

After Meigs' son Lt. John R. Meigs (left) died, in October 1864, the general ordered a tomb for 2,111 unknowns (far left) dug in Mary Lee's garden. Pvt. William Christman (below left) was the first soldier to be laid to rest at Arlington, in May 1864. The burials of Sgt. George E. Davis Jr. and Maj. Audie Murphy (below center and right) followed their service in World War II.

so sick of war that generations would pass away before they would again appeal to it," Sherman wrote.

The war, of course, dragged on far longer than anyone expected. By the spring of 1864, Washington's temporary hospitals were overflowing with sick and dying soldiers, who began to fill local cemeteries just as General Lee and the Union commander, Gen. Ulysses S. Grant, began their blistering Forty Days' Campaign, exchanging blows from Virginia's Wilderness to Petersburg. The fighting produced some 82,000 casualties in just over a month. Meigs cast about for a new graveyard to accommodate the rising tide of bodies. His eye fell upon Arlington.

THE FIRST SOLDIER LAID TO REST there was Pvt. William Christman, 21, of the 67th Pennsylvania Infantry, who was buried in a plot on Arlington's northeast corner on May 13, 1864. A farmer newly recruited into the Army, Christman never knew a day of combat. Like others who would join him at Arlington, he was felled by disease; he died of peritonitis in Washington's Lincoln General Hospital on May 11. His body was committed to the earth with no flags flying, no bugles playing and no family or chaplain to see him off. A simple pine headboard, painted white with black lettering, identified his grave, like the markers for Pvt. William H. McKinney and other soldiers too poor to be embalmed and sent home for burial. The indigent dead soon filled the Lower Cemetery—a name that described both its physical and social status—across the lane from a graveyard for slaves and freedmen.

The next month, Meigs moved to make official what was already a matter of practice: "I recommend that . . . the land surrounding the Arlington Mansion, now understood to be the property of the United States, be appropriated as a National Military Cemetery, to be properly enclosed, laid out and carefully preserved for that purpose," he wrote Stanton on June 15, 1864. Meigs proposed devoting 200 acres to the new graveyard. He also suggested that Christman and others recently interred in the Lower Cemetery should be unearthed and reburied closer to Lee's hilltop home. "The grounds about the Mansion are admirably adapted to such a use," he wrote.

Stanton endorsed the quartermaster's recommendation the same day.

Loyalist newspapers applauded the birth of Arlington National Cemetery, one of 13 new graveyards created specifically for those dying in the Civil War. "This and the [Freedmen's Village] . . . are righteous uses of the estate of the Rebel General Lee," read the *Washington Morning Chronicle*.

Touring the new national cemetery on the day that Stanton signed his order, Meigs was incensed to see where the graves were being dug. "It was my intention to have begun the interments nearer the mansion," he fumed, "but opposition on the part of officers stationed at Arlington, some of whom . . . did not like to have the dead buried near them, caused the interments to be begun" in the Lower

Take a tour of the cemetery's unlikely residents at Smithsonian.com/arlington

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS (2); BRUCE DALE (3)

Cemetery, where Christman and others were buried.

To enforce his orders—and to make Arlington uninhabitable for the Lees—Meigs evicted officers from the mansion, installed a military chaplain and a loyal lieutenant to oversee cemetery operations, and proceeded with new burials, encircling Mrs. Lee's garden with the tombstones of prominent Union officers. The first of these was Capt. Albert H. Packard of the 31st Maine Infantry. Shot in the head during the Battle of the Second Wilderness, Packard had miraculously survived his journey from the Virginia front to Washington's Columbian College Hospital, only to die there. On May 17, 1864, he was laid to rest where Mary Lee had enjoyed reading in warm weather, surrounded by the scent of honeysuckle and jasmine. By the end of 1864, some 40 officers' graves had joined his.

Meigs added others as soon as conditions allowed. He dispatched crews to scour battlefields for unknown soldiers near Washington. Then he excavated a huge pit at the end of Mrs. Lee's garden, filled it with the remains of 2,111 nameless soldiers and raised a sarcophagus in their honor. He understood that by seeding the garden with prominent Union officers and unknown patriots, he would make it politically difficult to disinter these heroes of the Republic at a later date.

The last autumn of the war produced thousands of new casualties, including Lt. John Rodgers Meigs, one of the quartermaster's four sons. Lieutenant Meigs, 22, was shot on October 3, 1864, while on a scouting mission for Gen. Philip Sheridan in Virginia's Shenandoah Valley. He was returned with solemn honors to Washington, where Lincoln, Stanton and other dignitaries joined his father for the funeral and burial in Georgetown. The loss of his "noble precious son" only deepened Meigs' antipathy toward Robert E. Lee.

"The rebels are all murderers of my son and the sons of hundreds of thousands," Meigs exploded when he learned of Lee's surrender to Grant on April 9, 1865. "Justice seems not satisfied [if] they escape judicial trial & execution . . . by the government which they have betrayed [&] attacked & whose people loyal & disloyal they have slaughtered." If Lee and other Confederates escaped punishment because of pardons or paroles, Meigs hoped that Congress would at least banish them from American soil.

Lee avoided the spectacle of a trial. Treason charges were filed against him but quietly dropped, almost certainly because his former adversary, Grant, interceded on Lee's behalf with President Andrew Johnson. Settling in Lexington, Virginia, Lee took over as president of Washington College, a struggling little school deep in the Shenandoah Valley, and encouraged old comrades to work for peace.

The Lees would spend the postwar years trying to retake possession of their estate.

MARY LEE FELT A GROWING OUTRAGE. "I cannot write with composure on my own cherished Arlington," she wrote to a friend. The graves "are planted up to the very door without any regard to common decency. . . . If justice & law are not utterly extinct in the U.S., I will have it back."

Her husband, however, kept his ambitions for Arlington hidden from all but a few advisers and family members. "I have not taken any steps in the matter," he cautioned a Washington lawyer who offered to take on the Arlington case for free, "under the belief that at present I could accomplish no good." But he encouraged the lawyer to research the case quietly and to coordinate his efforts with Francis L. Smith, Lee's trusted legal adviser in Alexandria. To his elder brother Smith Lee, who had served as an officer in the Confederate navy, the general admitted that he wanted to "regain the possession of A." and particularly "to terminate the burial of the dead which can only be done by its restoration to the family."

To gauge whether this was possible, Smith Lee made a clandestine visit to the old estate in the autumn or winter of 1865. He concluded that the place could be made habitable again if a wall was built to screen the graves from the mansion. But Smith Lee made the mistake of sharing his views with the cemetery superintendent, who dutifully shared them with Meigs, along with the mystery visitor's identity.

"I cannot write with composure on my own cherished Arlington," Mary Lee wrote to a friend. The graves "are planted up to the very door without any regard to common decency. . . . If justice & law are not utterly extinct in the U.S., I will have it back."

While the Lees worked to reclaim Arlington, Meigs urged Edwin Stanton in early 1866 to make sure the government had sound title to the cemetery. The land had been consecrated by the remains buried there and could not be given back to the Lees, he insisted, striking a refrain he would repeat in the years ahead. Yet the Lees clung to the hope that Arlington might be returned to the family—if not to Mrs. Lee, then to one of their sons. The former general was quietly pursuing this objective when he met with his lawyers for the last time, in July 1870. "The prospect does not look promising," he reported to Mary. The question of Arlington's ownership was still unresolved when Lee died, at 63, in Lexington, on October 12, 1870.

His widow continued to obsess over the loss of her home. Within weeks, Mary Lee petitioned Congress to examine the federal claim to Arlington and estimate the costs of removing the bodies buried there.

HER PROPOSAL WAS BITTERLY PROTESTED on the Senate floor and defeated, 54 to 4. It was a disaster for Mary Lee, but

the debate helped to elevate Arlington's status: no longer a potter's field created in the desperation of wartime, the cemetery was becoming something far grander, a place senators referred to as hallowed ground, a shrine for "the sacred dead," "the patriot dead," "the heroic dead" and "patriotic graves."

The plantation the Lees had known became less recognizable each year. Many original residents of Freedmen's Village stayed on after the war, raising children and grandchildren in the little houses the Army had built for them. Meigs stayed on, too, serving as quartermaster general for two decades, shaping the look of the cemetery. He raised a Greek-style Temple of Fame to George Washington and to distinguished Civil War generals by Mrs. Lee's garden, established a wisteria-draped amphitheater large enough to accommodate 5,000 people for ceremonies and even prescribed new plantings for the garden's borders (elephant ears and canna). He watched the officers' section of the cemetery sprout enormous tombstones typical of the Gilded Age. And he erected a massive red arch at the cemetery's entrance to honor Gen. George B. McClellan, one of the Civil War's most popular—and least effective—officers. As was his habit, Meigs included his name on the arch; it was chiseled into the entrance column and lettered in gold. Today, it is one of the first things a visitor sees when approaching the cemetery from the east.

While Meigs built, Mary Lee managed a farewell visit to Arlington in June 1873. Accompanied by a friend, she rode in a carriage for three hours through a landscape utterly transformed, filled with old memories and new graves. "My visit produced one good effect," she wrote later that week. "The change is so entire that I have not the yearning to go back there & shall be more content to resign all my right in it." She died in Lexington five months later, at age 65.

With her death, her hopes for Arlington lived on in her eldest son, George Washington Custis Lee, known as Custis. For him, regaining the estate was a matter of both filial obligation and self-interest: he had no inheritance beyond the Arlington property.

When Custis Lee (above: late 1800s) sold Arlington back to the United States, Secretary of War Robert Todd Lincoln (left: 1870s) accepted the title to the estate.

On April 6, 1874, within months of his mother's funeral, Custis went to Congress with a new petition. Avoiding her inflammatory suggestion that Arlington be cleared of graves, he asked instead for an admission that the property had been taken unlawfully and requested compensation for it. He argued that his mother's good-faith attempt to pay the "insurrectionary tax" of $92.07 on Arlington was the same as if she *had* paid it.

While the petition languished for months in the Senate Judiciary Committee, Meigs worried that it would "interfere with the United States' tenure of this National Cemetery—a result to be avoided by all just means." He need not have worried. A few weeks later, the petition died quietly in committee, attended by no debate and scant notice.

Custis Lee might have given up then and there if not for signs that the hard feelings between North and South were beginning to soften. Rutherford B. Hayes, a Union veteran elected on the promise of healing scars from the Civil War, was sworn in as president in March 1877.

Hayes hardly had time to unpack his bags before Custis Lee revived the campaign for Arlington—this time in court.

ASSERTING OWNERSHIP OF the property, Lee asked the Circuit Court of Alexandria, Virginia, to evict all trespassers occupying it as a result of the 1864 auction. As soon as U.S. Attorney General Charles Devens heard about the suit, he asked that the case be shifted to federal court, where he felt the government would get a fairer hearing. In July 1877, the matter landed in the lap of Judge Robert W. Hughes of the U.S. Circuit Court for the Eastern District of Virginia. Hughes, a lawyer and newspaper editor, had been appointed to the bench by President Grant.

After months of legal maneuvering and arguments, Hughes ordered a jury trial. Custis Lee's team of lawyers was headed by Francis L. Smith, the Alexandrian who had strategized with Lee's father years before. Their argument

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VIRGINIA HISTORICAL SOCIETY; GRANGER COLLECTION, NEW YORK

turned upon the legality of the 1864 tax sale. After a six-day trial, a jury found for Lee on January 30, 1879: by requiring the "insurrectionary tax" to be paid in person, the government had deprived Custis Lee of his property without due process of law. "The impolicy of such a provision of law is as obvious to me as its unconstitutionality," Hughes wrote. "Its evil would be liable to fall not only upon disloyal but upon the most loyal citizens. A severe illness lasting only ninety or a hundred days would subject the owner of land to the irreclaimable loss of its possession."

The government appealed the verdict to the Supreme Court—which ruled for Lee again. On December 4, 1882, Associate Justice Samuel Freeman Miller, a Kentucky native appointed by President Lincoln, wrote for the 5 to 4 majority, holding that the 1864 tax sale had been unconstitutional and was therefore invalid.

The Lees had retaken Arlington.

This left few options for the federal government, which was now technically trespassing on private property. It could abandon an Army fort on the grounds, roust the residents of Freedmen's Village, disinter almost 20,000 graves and vacate the property. Or it could buy the estate from Custis Lee—if he was willing to sell it.

He was. Both sides agreed on a price of $150,000, the property's fair market value. Congress quickly appropriated the funds. Lee signed papers conveying the title on March 31, 1883, which placed federal ownership of Arlington beyond dispute. The man who formally accepted title to the property for the government was none other than Robert Todd Lincoln, secretary of war and son of the president so often bedeviled by Custis Lee's father. If the sons of such adversaries could bury past arguments, perhaps there was hope for national reunion.

THE SAME YEAR THE SUPREME COURT ruled in Custis Lee's favor, Montgomery Meigs, having reached the mandatory retirement age of 65, was forced out of the quartermaster's job. He would remain active in Washington for another decade, designing and overseeing construction of the Pension Building, serving as a Regent of the Smithsonian Institution and as a member of the National Academy of Sciences. He was a frequent visitor to Arlington, where he had buried his wife, Louisa, in 1879. The burials of other family members followed—among them his father, numerous in-laws and his son, John, reburied from Georgetown. Their graves, anchoring Row 1, Section 1 of the cemetery, far outnumbered those of any Lee relatives on the estate.

On August 29, 2009, Sen. Edward M. Kennedy joined his slain brothers, John and Robert, at Arlington.

Meigs joined his family in January 1892, age 75, after a brief bout with the flu. He made the final journey from Washington in fine style, accompanied by an Army band, flying flags and an honor guard of 150 soldiers decked out in their best uniforms. His flag-draped caisson rattled across the river, up the long slope to Arlington and across the meadow of tombstones he had so assiduously cultivated. With muffled drums marking time and guidons snapping in the chill wind, the funeral procession passed Mary Lee's garden and came to a halt on Meigs Drive. The rifles barked their last salute, "Taps" sounded over the tawny hills and soldiers eased Montgomery C. Meigs into the ground at the heart of the cemetery he created.

DOUG MILLS / AFP / GETTY IMAGES; BRUCE DALE

Pre-Civil War remains were reburied at Arlington after 1900; the 300,000 dead there include veterans of all the nation's wars.

DECODING JACKSON

Did the Abstract Expressionist hide his name amid the swirls and torrents of a

BY HENRY ADAMS

It was my wife, Marianne Berardi, who first saw the letters.

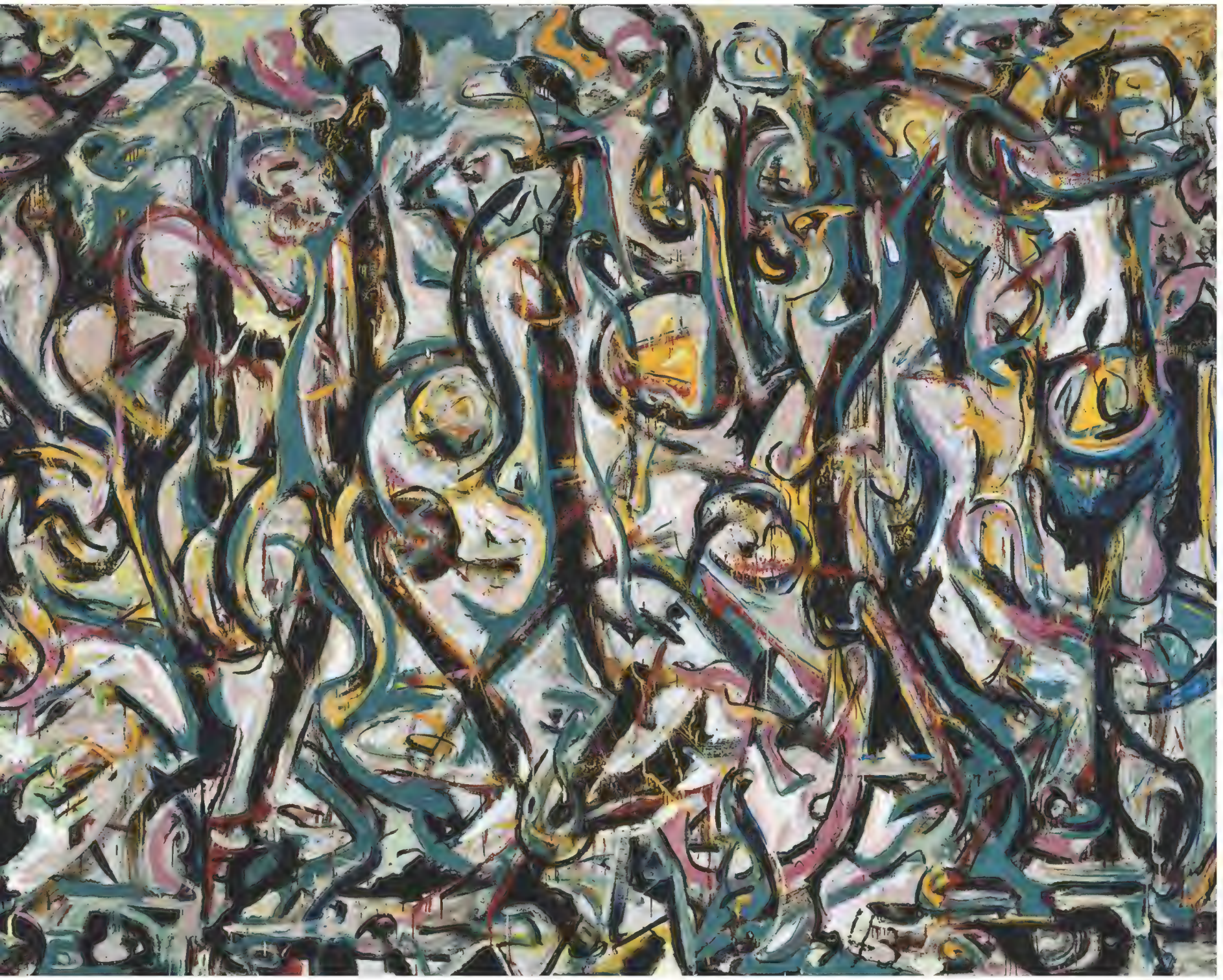
We were looking at a reproduction of Jackson Pollock's breakthrough work, *Mural*, an 8- by 20-foot canvas bursting with physical energy that, in 1943, was unlike anything seen before.

The critic Clement Greenberg, Pollock's principal champion, said he took one look at the painting and realized that "Jackson was the greatest painter this country has produced." A Museum of Modern Art curator, the late Kirk Varnedoe, said *Mural* established Jackson Pollock as the world's premier modern painter.

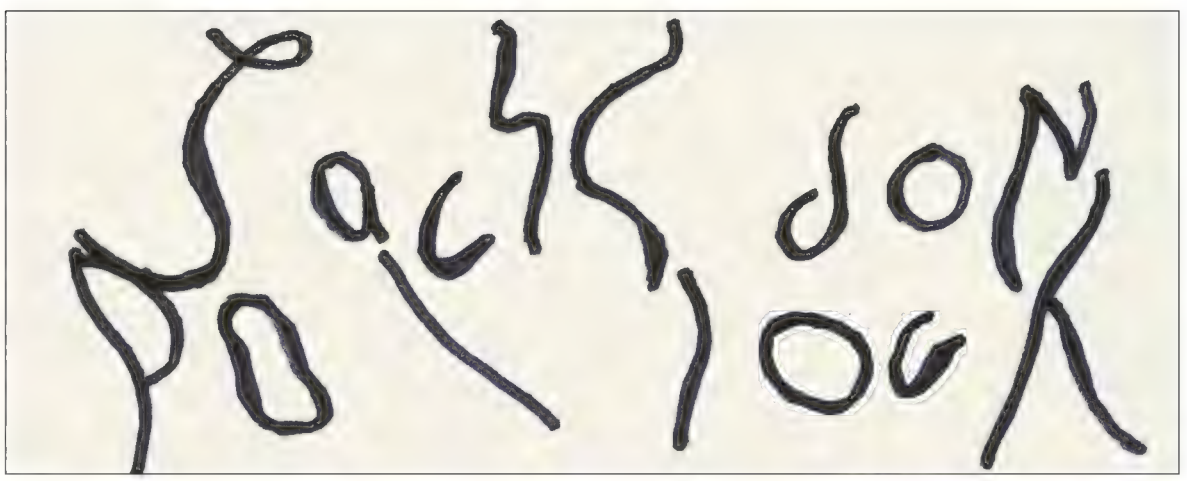
JACKSON POLLOCK AND LEE KRASNER PAPERS, CA. 1905-1984 / ARCHIVES OF AMERICAN ART, SI

I was researching a book about Pollock's lifelong relationship with his mentor, Thomas Hart Benton, the famed regionalist and muralist, when I sat puzzling over *Mural* after breakfast one morning with Marianne, herself an art historian. She suddenly said she could make out the letters *S-O-N* in blackish paint in the upper right area of the mural. Then she realized *JACKSON* ran across the entire top. And finally she saw *POLLOCK* below that.

POLLOCK

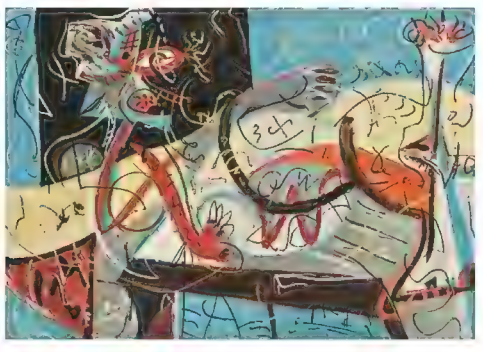


legendary 1943 mural? An art historian makes the case for a signature gesture



HENRY ADAMS; PP. 58-59 GIFT OF PEGGY GUGGENHEIM, UNIVERSITY OF IOWA MUSEUM OF ART, IOWA CITY, IA (1959.6) / ©2009 POLLOCK-KRASNER FOUNDATION / ARS, NY

The author contends that Pollock (opposite: c. 1945) created *Mural* (above) around the letters of his name, camouflaged but discernible (left: the author's diagram). Nobody has published such a claim before. Some art experts dispute the idea. Others say it's plausible and should be tested. Debate will ensue: *Mural* is one of America's most highly valued artworks.



Peggy Guggenheim (above: in her Manhattan apartment with Pollock and *Mural*) commissioned the work. To some experts, numbers and symbols on earlier Pollock canvases (left: 1942's *Stenographic Figure*) bolster the theory that he hid his name in the huge painting.

The characters are unorthodox, even ambiguous, and largely hidden. But, she pointed out, it could hardly be random coincidence to find just those letters in that sequence.

I was flabbergasted. It's not every day that you see something new in one of the 20th century's most important artworks.

I'm now convinced that Pollock wrote his name in large letters on the canvas—indeed, arranged the whole painting around his name. As far as I can tell, no one has previously made this assertion. Nor is there evidence that Pollock himself, who was loath to talk about his art and left behind few written records, ever mentioned this coded gesture.

HENRY ADAMS *is the author of* Tom and Jack: The Intertwined Lives of Thomas Hart Benton and Jackson Pollock, *to be published this month by Bloomsbury Press.*

I've shared my theory with several Pollock experts. They've had mixed reactions, from "no way" to "far-fetched" to "maybe."

"It's feasible," says Sue Taylor, an art historian at Portland State University, who has studied Pollock's 1942 canvas *Stenographic Figure*, which includes written symbols. "Pollock would often begin with some sort of figurative device to which he would then respond—and eventually bury under layers of paint. Letters and numbers, moreover, frequently appear in works of the early 1940s."

It may not be possible to answer the question definitively unless scientists use X-ray scanning or some other method to trace which pigments were put down first. At the moment there are no plans to do such an analysis.

If my theory holds up, it has many implications. *Mural*, commissioned by the collector Peggy Guggenheim for her New York City apartment, is the stuff of legend. Owned by the University of Iowa since Guggenheim donated it in 1948, the painting is said to be worth $140 million. (A later Jackson Pollock painting, *Number 5, 1948*, reportedly sold in 2006 for $140 million—the highest price ever paid for a work of art.) *Mural* is so central to the Pollock mystique that in the 2000 movie *Pollock*, the artist (played by Ed Harris), having stared perplexedly at a giant empty canvas for months, executes *Mural* in a single session the night before it's due to be delivered. That (standard) version of events, originally advanced by Pollock's wife, the artist Lee Krasner, reinforces the image of Pollock as an anguished, spontaneous genius. But the art critic Francis V. O'Connor has debunked the story, saying Pollock probably executed *Mural* during the summer of 1943, not in one night in late December.

Pollock's possibly writing his name in *Mural* testifies to an overlooked feature of his works: they have a structure, contrary to the popular notion that they could be done by any 5-year-old with a knack for splatters. In my view, Pollock organized the painting around his name according to a compositional system—vertical markings that serve as the loci of rhythmic spirals—borrowed directly from his mentor, Benton.

Pollock had studied under Benton for two years and once told a friend that he wanted *Mural* to be comparable to a Benton work, though he didn't have the technical ability to make a great realistic mural and needed to do something different.

I have found no evidence that Pollock wrote his name in such fashion on any other canvas. In a way, that makes sense. To Pollock, I think, *Mural* announced that he was replacing Benton, a father figure whom he once described as "the foremost American painter today." It was Pollock's way of making a name for himself.

Take a closer look at the "hidden name" at Smithsonian.com/pollock

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THE GREAT WIDE OPEN

A land of silvery light and cherished silences, astonishing peaks and local drollery, gold rush saloons and sealskin tumblers, Alaska perpetuates the belief that anything is possible *By Pico Iyer*

We were flying what seemed only inches above 20,300-foot-high Mount McKinley, now more often called by its Athabaskan name—Denali. Below our six-seat Cessna was a glacier extending 36 miles from the great peak. The doors of the little plane were open so that a photographer swathed in gloves and sweaters could lean out and capture the scene. I tried not to think about the statistic I'd spotted that morning on a bulletin board, a tally of the year's climbing figures at Denali: "Missing/Fatalities: 4."

It was a sparkling August morning—eight inches of snow had fallen four days before—and the snow line, after a chill and rainy summer, was already hundreds of feet lower than usual for this time of year. After barely six hours of sleep in semi-darkness, I had awoken at Camp Denali before dawn to see an unearthly pink glow light up the sharpened peaks. My cabin offered no electricity, no running water, no phone or Internet connection and no indoor plumbing. What it did offer was the rare luxury of silence, of stillness, of shockingly clear views of the snowcaps 20 miles away.

I'm not an outdoors person; the cabin's propane lamps defeated me daily and walking 50 feet through the cold near-dark to get icy water from a tiny tap was an amenity it took a while to appreciate. Northern exposure has never appealed to me as much as southern light.

But Alaska was celebrating its 50th anniversary—it became the 49th state on January 3, 1959—and the festivities were a reminder how, in its quirkiness, the state expanded and challenged our understanding of what our Union is all about. In almost 20,000 days on earth I had never set foot in our largest state, and as I stepped out of the Cessna and collected my heart again, wondering if forgoing travel insurance made me an honorary Alaskan, I was starting to see how Nature's creations could command one's senses as grippingly as any artist's perfections along Venice's Grand Canal. Wild open space holds a power that no museum or chandeliered restaurant can match.

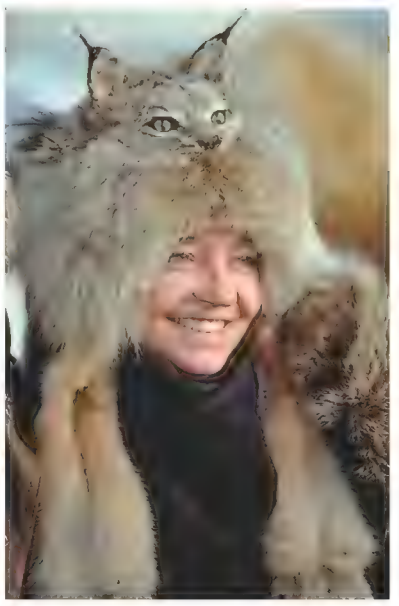
ALASKA PLAYS HAVOC WITH YOUR SENSES and turns everyday logic on its head. It's the westernmost state of the Union, as well, of course, as the northernmost, but I was surprised to learn, the day I arrived, that it is also (because

Alaska—from Denali (opposite) to the stuffed bear on an Anchorage street, "plays havoc with your senses and turns everyday logic on its head," the author decided.

the Aleutian Islands are across the International Date Line) the easternmost. Alaska is more than twice the size of Texas, I had read, yet has fewer miles of highway than Vermont.

When faced with such facts, one reaches for bearings, for ways to steady oneself. Hours after I touched down, from California, I set my watch back an hour, walked the few small blocks of downtown Anchorage (ending abruptly at a great expanse of water) and realized I was surrounded by Canada, Russia and the Arctic. The unpeopledness and scale of things made me feel as if I had fallen off the edge of the earth, into an entirely otherworldly place like nothing I had ever seen (with the possible exception of Iceland or parts of Australia), with people sitting on benches in the weird gray light of 9:30 p.m. and indigenous souls selling turquoise-colored teddy bears along a busy street. The shops in the scrappy center of town were offering "FREE ULU KNIFE with purchase of $50 or more" and "Raven Lunatic Art." One store's signs—advertising salmon-leather wallets, Sahale nuts and sealskin tumblers—were in both English and Japanese. Large stuffed bears stood outside other stores, and a stuffed moose stood guard outside a Starbucks.

Yet all around these desultory and somehow provisional signs of human settlement there was a silver sharpness to the air, a northern clarity. On clear days, you could see Denali, 140 miles away, from downtown Anchorage. At midnight, you could read a book on an unlit street. I remembered that naturalist John Muir had found in the local skies a radiance and sense of possibility that seemed to border on the divine. "The clearest of Alaskan air is always appreciably substantial," the Scottish-born visionary had written—he had set off without his bride to scout Alaska days after his wedding—"so much so that it would seem as if one might test its quality by rubbing it between the thumb and finger."



Contradictions and scale (opposite top: hikers in Denali park; opposite bottom: no Big Macs for a moose in Homer; above: a lynx fur hat) made the author feel as if he'd fallen off the edge of the earth into "an otherworldly place like nothing I had ever seen."

park. Right next to my house."

"In the outskirts of the city?"

"No. Pretty close to where we're standing right now."

The next day, the same matter-of-fact strangeness, the same sense of smallness amid the elements, the same polished wryness—and the way these played off scenes so majestic and overpowering they humbled me—resumed at dawn. A young newcomer from Virginia was driving our bus the five-and-a-half hours to the railway depot just outside Denali National Park. "You can look for some of the local sights as we pull out," he said as we started up. "One thing I like watching for is the gas prices rising as we go out of the city." A little later, taking on what I was coming to think of as a distinctive Alaskan love of drollness, he announced, "If you feel a strange fluttering in your heart, an inexplicable sense of excitement, that may be because we're coming up on the Duct Tape Capital of the World"—Sarah Palin's own Wasilla.

Yet as he dropped us at the park entrance, where a worn, dusty blue and white bus was waiting to take us into the wilderness itself, all ironies fell away. Almost no private cars are allowed in Denali—an expanse of six million acres, larger than all of New Hampshire—and the number of full-service lodges where you can spend the night can be counted on the fingers of one hand. Most people enter by bus, driving about 60 miles along a single narrow road to see what they can of "The Mountain," then hurry out again. We, however, were treated to a drive of 75 miles over unpaved roads to our little cabins in Camp Denali, where moose and bears walked around and towering snowcaps reflected in the pond.

When at last we drew up to our destination in the chill twilight, a troupe of caribou was silhouetted on a ridge nearby, and a golden eagle was diving down from its nest. By first light next morning, I felt so washed clean by the silence and the calm that I could hardly remember the person who, a week before, had run an apprehensive finger across a map from Icy Cape to Deadhorse to the first place I'd seen on arrival, Turnagain Bay—names suggesting that life was not easy here.

YOU DON'T COME TO ALASKA FOR ITS CITIES, I started to understand, but for everything that puts them in their place. An Anchorage resident pointed out a reindeer sitting placidly in a cage in a small downtown garden maintained by an eccentric citizen.

"Your first piece of wildlife!" my new friend announced with pride.

"Actually, my second," I countered. "I saw a moose grazing by the road just outside the airport, coming in."

"Yeah," he answered, unimpressed. "I saw some whales while driving up here. A bear, too. One of them just mauled a woman who was going for a hike in my neighborhood

A quiet place, I was coming to see, teaches you attention; stillness makes you keen-eared as a bear, as alert to sounds in the brush as I had been, a few days before, in Venice, to key changes in Vivaldi. That first Denali morning one of the cheerful young naturalists at the privately owned camp took a group of us out into the tundra. "Six million acres with almost no trails," she exulted. She showed us how to "read" the skull of a caribou—its lost antler suggested it died before the

MAP: GUILBERT GATES; DOUGLAS PEEBLES / CORBIS; P. 65 JEFF SCHULTZ / ALASKA STOCK LLC; STEVE KAUFMAN / CORBIS; P. 62-63 CARY ANDERSON / AURORA PHOTOS P. 63 PAUL SOUDERS / WORLDFOTO

spring—and handed me her binoculars, turned the wrong way round, so that I could see, as through a microscope, the difference between rushes and grass. She pointed out the sandhill cranes whose presence heralded the coming autumn, and she even identified the berries in bear scat, which she was ready to eat, she threatened, should our attention begin to flag.

The springy tundra ("like walking on a trampoline," a fellow visitor remarked) was turning scarlet and yellow, another augury of autumn. "You really don't need to calculate how many people there are per square mile," said a pathologist from Chattanooga squishing through the tussocks behind me. "You need to find out how many miles there are per square people." (He's right: the population density is roughly 1.1 person per square mile.)

What this sense of unending expanse—of loneliness and space and possibility—does to the soul is the story of America, which has always been a place for people lighting out for new territory and seeking new horizons. Every bus driver I met in Alaska seemed to double as tour guide and kept up a steady bombardment of statistics, as if unable to contain his fresh astonishment. Eleven percent of the world's earthquakes crack the ground here. There is a fault in Alaska almost twice as large as California's San Andreas. Anchorage is within 9.5 hours by plane of 90 percent of the civilized world (and roughly five minutes by foot from the wild).

"You need around 2,000 feet of water to land a floatplane," one of these sharers of wonders told me my first day in the state. "You know how many bodies of water with at least that much space there are in Alaska?"

"A thousand."

"No."

"Ten thousand?"

"No. Three million." And with that he went back to driving his bus.

A FEW HOURS AFTER I GOT OUT of the wobbly, swooping Cessna that had whooshed me out of Denali, I was getting into another tiny mechanical thing with wings to plunge down into the hidden cove of Redoubt Bay. I stepped out of the plane, with two others, at a small landing in a lake, slopes of Sitka spruce rising above us, and as I walked into a lounge (where an iPod was playing the Sofia National Opera), I noticed fresh paw marks on the cabin door.

"A dog?" I asked.

"Naw. A bear. Go to one of the three outhouses out there and you're liable to meet her."

I sat down for a cup of tea and asked one of the workers how far to the nearest road.

"You mean a road that takes you somewhere?" he answered, and thought for a long, long time. "Round about 60 miles," he said at last. "More or less."

This isn't unusual for Alaska, and many homesteaders live so far from transportation that they have to flag down an Alaska Railroad train when they want to go into town. (Some haul back refrigerators and couches in its carriages.) Small wonder that so many of the few souls who do set up shop here, so far from society, take pride in their eccentricities. "Met a guy down at the Salty Dawg in Homer," one of the workers at Redoubt Bay began, "told me he could make me a nuclear bomb, right there at the bar. I thought he was putting one over on me, but a physicist friend said all the numbers checked out."

Matter-of-fact strangeness and smallness amid the elements (above: Homer's Salty Dawg Saloon; opposite top: Homer) play off scenes so majestic and overpowering (opposite bottom: ice sculptures in Glacier Bay National Park) "they humbled me," the author writes.

"Biggest number of bears I ever saw in this guy's backyard," another worker piped up, "was 52. He used to go round with a stick and put a roll of toilet paper on one end. Doused in kerosene and then lit. Shake that thing, the bears stayed away.

"Only time he killed a bear in 40 years was when one came into his house."

I've lived in the American West for more than four decades, but I began to wonder if I had ever really seen—or breathed—true American promise before. Every time I stepped off a boat or plane in Alaska, I felt as if I were walking back into the 19th century, where anything was possible and the continent was a new world, waiting to be explored. "Last time I was here, back in 1986," a Denali dinner-mate told me, "some folks from the lodge decided to go off panning for gold one evening. Over near Kantishna. One of them came back with a nugget that weighed a pound."

Once the season ended at Camp Denali, in mid-September, many of the young workers would be heading off to Ladakh or Tasmania or Turkey or some other faraway location. More surprisingly, many of the lodge workers and bush pilots I met, even those no longer young, told me that they migrated every winter to Hawaii, not unlike the humpback whales. Avoiding the lower 48, they crafted lives that alternated between tropical winters and summer evenings of never-ending light.

It was as if everyone sought out the edges here, in a society that offers no center and nothing seemed abnormal but normality. In the blowy little settlement of Homer—my next stop—kids in knit caps were serving up "Spicy Indian Vegetable Soup" in a café, dreadlocks swinging, while

PICO IYER *has written nine books. His most recent is* The Open Road: The Global Journey of the Fourteenth Dalai Lama.

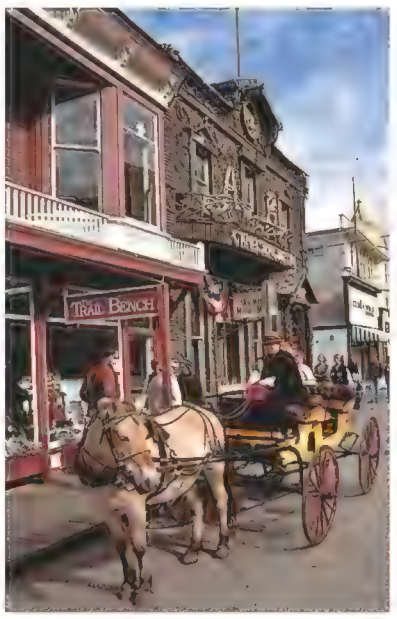
DANITA DELIMONT / ALAMY; PP. 66 PANORAMIC IMAGES / GETTY IMAGES; MARC MUENCH

across town, at the famous Salty Dawg Saloon, weathered workers were playing Playboy video games.

Some of the shops nearby were selling qiviut scarves, made from the unimaginably soft fur of a musk ox, while others sold photographs of the unearthly wash of green and purple lights from the aurora in winter. Out on the Homer Spit someone had spelled out a message in twigs that seemed to speak for many: "I am Driftin'."

ROUGHLY THREE out of every five visitors to Alaska view the state from their porthole as they sail along the coast. Many visiting cruise ships embark from Vancouver and head up through the Inside Passage to the great turquoise-and-aqua tidewater sculptures of Glacier Bay, the silence shattered by the gunfire sounds of chunks of ice ten stories high calving in the distance. For days on the ship I boarded, the regal *Island Princess*, all I could see was openness and horizon. Then we would land at one of the wind-swept settlements along the coast—Skagway, Juneau, Ketchikan.

In these rough, weather-beaten towns sustained by vessels that visit only a few months every year, you can sense the speculative spirit the state still inspires, translated now into a thousand tongues and a global hope. In Skagway, amid the old gold rush brothels and saloons, I came upon two doleful Turks selling lavish carpets at a store called Oriental Rugs. At the Port of Call shop around the corner, haunted mostly by crews from the cruise ships, a Romanian was chatting on a cellphone rented by the minute, while stewards and chambermaids browsed among piles of papadums and banana nuts. Next door, a man on a Webcam had awakened his wife back home in Mexico.



In weather-beaten towns like Skagway (above) one senses the state's speculative spirit (opposite top: the bus in which searcher Christopher McCandless died). Like Alaska's humpback whales (opposite bottom), many seasonal workers winter in the Hawaiian islands.

ALASKA'S STATE MOTTO is "North to the Future," though of course the future never arrives. I walked around Juneau on a foggy, chill, late-summer morning (Southeastern Alaska's towns see an average of half an inch of rain a day), and the first statue that greeted me commemorated the 19th-century Philippine hero José Rizal, the poet and nationalist who was the most famous martyr of the Philippine Revolution, presiding over what is called Manila Square. Downtown I found a tanning salon, a Nepali handicrafts shop and a large emporium advertising "Ukrainian Eggs, Matreshka Dolls, Baltic Amber." Juneau, the only state capital that cannot be reached by road—"only by plane, boat or birth canal," a resident told me, in what sounded like a well-worn witticism—is nonetheless the home to fortune seekers from around the world drawn by its sense of wide-openness. Not far from downtown lies the Juneau Icefield, larger than Rhode Island and the source for the now receding Mendenhall Glacier, and in open waters half an hour away I saw humpback whales spouting and fanning their tails only a few feet from our boat, while sea lions cavorted even closer.

Alaska's central question is the American one: How much can a person live in the wild, and what is the cost of such a life, to the person and to the wild? By the time I reached Alaska, much of the world knew the story—dramatized by Jon Krakauer's book and Sean Penn's film, both called *Into the Wild*—of Christopher McCandless, the high-minded, unworldly dreamer who hitched his way to Alaska to live according to the back-to-the-land ideals of Thoreau and Tolstoy. Camping out in a bus near Denali, the idealist soon died. And every time a bear clambered across my horizon, I thought of Timothy Treadwell, another American Romantic archetype, who had spent summers in Alaska living with grizzlies, giving them names and convincing himself they were his friends, until an encounter with one went bad and he paid the ultimate price.

"A lot of people up here have no patience for these guys," a naturalist at Denali had told me when I asked her about the two men. "Because there are people here who have stayed in that bus, and they had no problems. But you've got to have respect for the land, to learn it. The one thing you learn here is preparedness."

That's why people in Alaska study how to read wolf scat and the habits of bears. "Right here she knows you're not going to come any closer, and she's fine," a guide at Redoubt Bay had explained about a nearby mother bear with her cubs. "But go somewhere she doesn't expect you, and Bailey will most likely kill you."

One morning in Denali, a hiking guide had pointed out a poisonous plant McCandless might have eaten by mistake. Then she showed me another plant, one, she said, that "would have kept him going to this day: Eskimo potatoes." (McCandless may have actually eaten the correct plant but mold on the seeds could have prevented his body from absorbing any nutrients.) To my eye they looked the same. I thought back to the maps I'd run my fingers along before coming here, many of the names opaque to me, others—Point Hope—sounding as if anxious visitors had tried, through invocation, to transform desolation into civilization. Some places seemed to combine prayers and warnings: Holy Cross, Elfin Cove, Cold Bay; Troublesome Creek, Moses Point, False Pass. Hours after I'd arrived in Anchorage, volcanic ash had drifted over from one of the Aleutian Islands, about a thousand miles away, closing down the airport—as if to say that all certainties were slamming shut and I was alone now in the realm of the possible.

Wander the world with dispatches from famous travel writers at Smithsonian.com/dreamtravel

LEE FOSTER; P. 69 SIMON WOZNIAK; PAUL SOUDERS / WORLDFOTO

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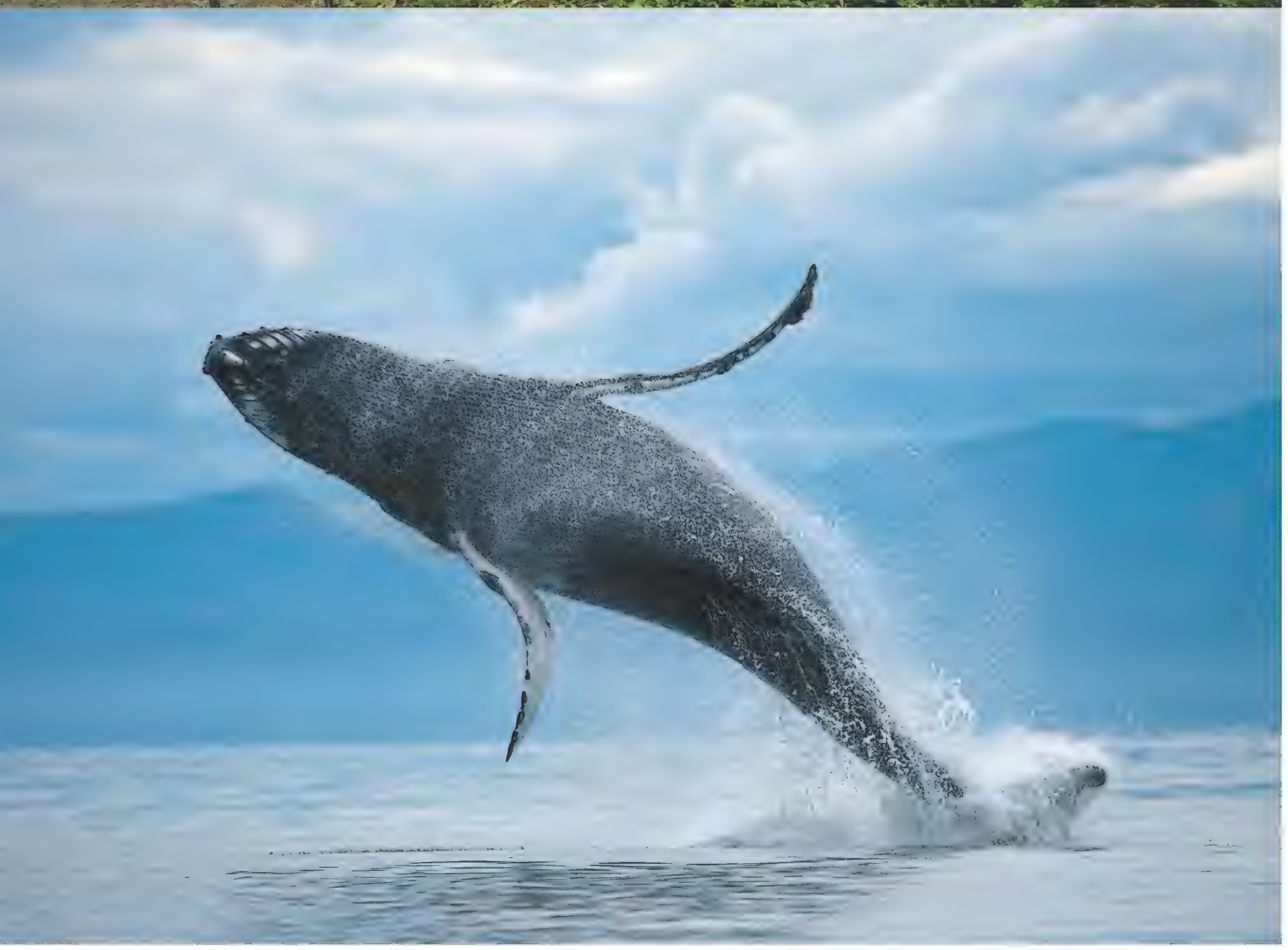


Shades of Ansel Adams

The photographer once likened taking pictures in color to playing an out-of-tune piano. But a new book shows he still had perfect pitch

BY RICHARD B. WOODWARD

ANSEL ADAMS NEVER MADE UP HIS MIND about color photography. Long before his death in 1984 at age 82, he foresaw that this "beguiling medium" might one day replace his cherished black and white. In notes tentatively dated to 1949, he observed that "color photography is rapidly becoming of major importance."

Yet he once likened working in color to playing an out-of-tune piano. America's regnant Western landscape photographer tried to control every step of picture-making, but for much of his lifetime too many stages of the color process were out of his hands. Kodachrome—the first mass-market color film, introduced in 1935—was so complicated that even Adams, a darkroom wizard, had to rely on labs to develop it. Color printing was a crapshoot in the 1940s and '50s. Reproductions in magazines and books could be garish or out of register. Before the 1960s, black-and-white film often actually yielded subtler, less exaggerated pictures of reality.

Still, Adams' misgivings did not prevent him from taking hundreds of color transparencies. As he traveled the country on commercial assignments or on Guggenheim Fellowships—a project to celebrate the national parks—

Adams (below: at the Grand Canyon, 1950) wrote of an "inevitable conflict" between the accuracy of color film and people's subjective reaction to colors (left: Sunrise, Death Valley National Monument, c. 1948).

he often took pictures in color as well as black and white. A generous selection of these Kodachromes, most created between 1946 and 1948, appears in a new book, *Ansel Adams in Color*, revised and expanded from the 1993 edition, with laser scans that might have met even his finicky standards.

American motorists of a certain age may have seen some of the images without knowing they were his. The Standard Oil Company (or Esso, a precursor of Exxon) purchased reproduction rights to a number of them to promote driving in America. If you filled up your tank at a Standard Oil gas station in 1947 or 1948, you might have been given an Adams picture—Crater Lake, say, or White Sands—as part of a series the company called "See Your West."

Anyone who walked through Grand Central Terminal in New York City around that time may recall seeing Adams' color work in a more imposing form. His photographs were among those that sparkled in the station's Kodak Coloramas, gigantic transparencies 18 feet high and 60 feet wide that loomed above the commuting throngs in the main concourse. Adams judged these (correctly) to be "aesthetically inconsequential but technically remarkable."

He shot in color because advertisers and corporations liked to present themselves in color, and he liked the money

See more of Ansel Adams' landscape photographs at Smithsonian.com/ansel

P. 71 GEORGE L. WATERS / THE ANSEL ADAMS PUBLISHING RIGHTS TRUST

ALL PHOTOS: THE ANSEL ADAMS PUBLISHING RIGHTS TRUST

they offered him; by 1935, he had a wife and two children to support. Work in this mode also may have allowed him to keep a sharp psychological distinction between those lucrative jobs and his more personal black-and-white *oeuvre*, for which he alone was to blame in case of failure.

But almost any technical photographic challenge interested him. He served as a longtime consultant for both Eastman Kodak and Polaroid, and the quest for true and reliable color obsessed both companies for decades. Adams wrote numerous articles for popular magazines on problems with the medium, often touching on philosophical issues. "There is an inevitable conflict between the photometric accuracy of the real

"The problem facing the color photographer is how to combine the optical precisions with an imaginative and well-balanced organization in color," Adams wrote in 1981. "In no other graphic medium can color be so offensive as in the interpretation of, for example, 'scenery.'" Thus he was a wary adventurer in color. (Clockwise, from top: Late Evening, Monument Valley, Utah, c. 1950; Papoose Room, Carlsbad Caverns National Park, New Mexico, c. 1947; Alloy, West Virginia, c. 1939.)

color film and the subjective emotional effects of colors in relation to each other," he wrote in a 1949 draft of one article.

The slow speed of early Kodachrome did not allow much beyond portraits, still lifes and landscapes. Stopping action was generally out of the question. To combat the static quality that hobbled photographers who used color during this period, Adams came up with a solution that would become standard: the multimedia slide show. For the journal *Photo Notes*, he wrote—in 1950!—"possibly one of the most important aspects of the medium would be revealed in the production of 35 mm or 2 1/4 x 2 1/4 slides which would be used in carefully planned projected sequences, using sound track for comment or music."

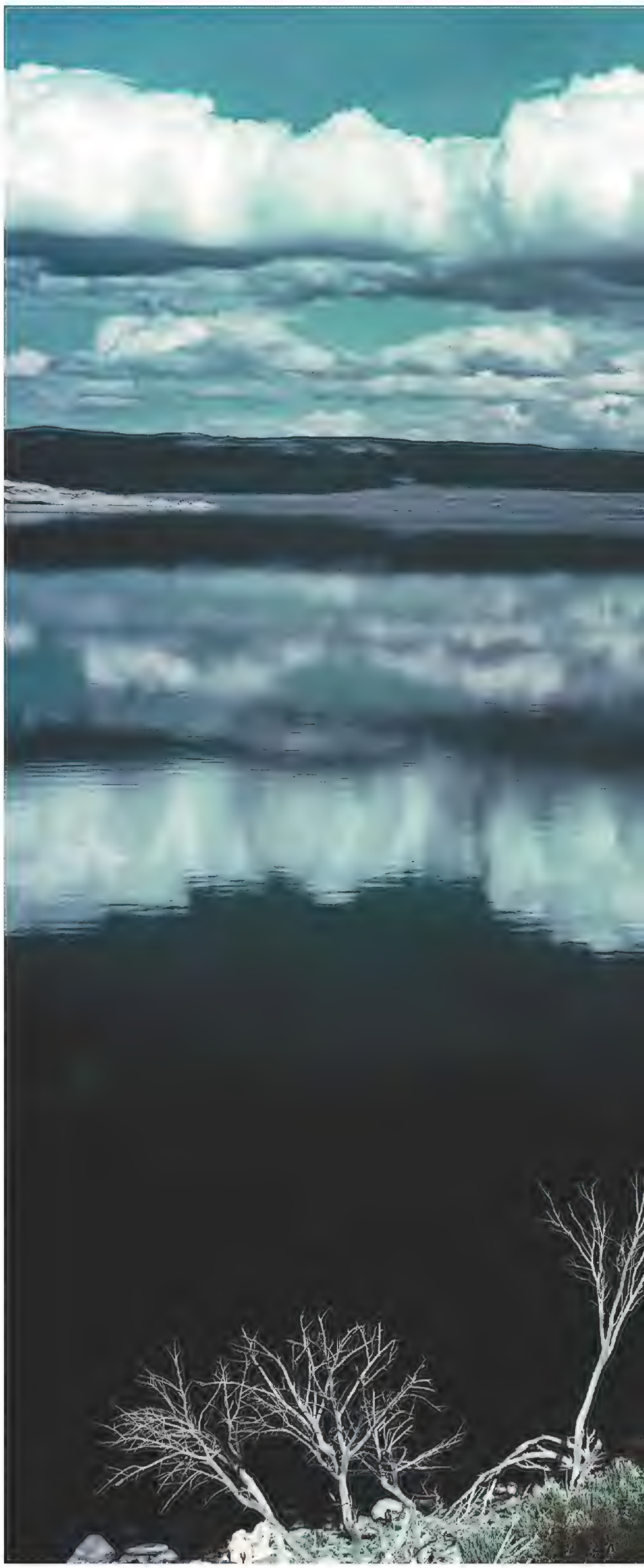
The images from the '40s and '50s in the new edition reveal how his approach to a subject changed (or didn't) according to the film he loaded in his camera. He had photographed the Ranchos de Taos church in New Mexico many times in austere black and white. (Taos Pueblo was the subject of his 1930 book collaboration with writer Mary Austin.) But his 1948 color photograph of the building at sunset rendered the adobe walls and the sky behind as if in throbbing slabs of pastel crayon.

This expressionist approach to color differs markedly from the nearly monochrome view of Mono Lake in California, from 1947, which is similar to many of his studies of clouds mirrored in water. In a class of its own is his view of Utah's Monument Valley circa 1950, in which he captured the warmth of the sun on the dusty sandstone amid long shadows. The photograph is more about transience, atmosphere and time immemorial than bands of color, and it's one of the finest color pictures he ever made.

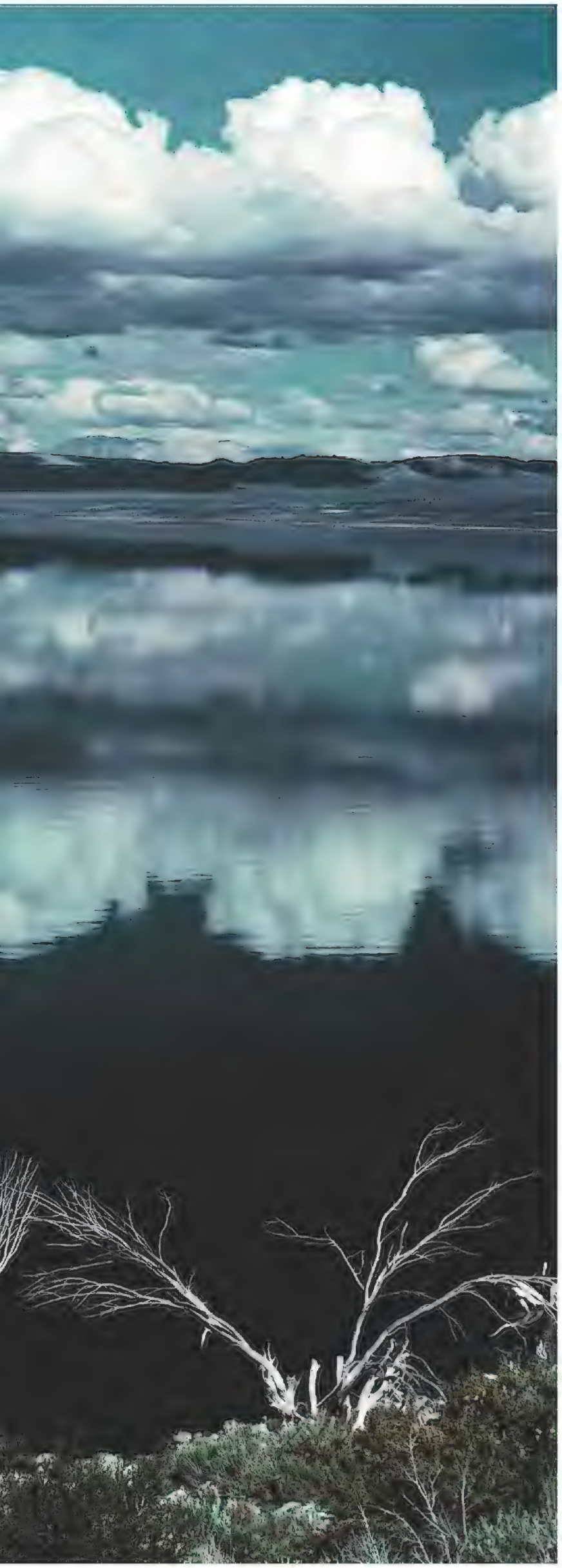
Adams thought enough of some of his color photographs to exhibit a selection of prints from his transparencies at the Museum of Modern Art in New York City in 1950. The fifth volume in his magisterial series on photographic techniques was to be devoted to color, but he died before getting to it.

Critical acclaim for the color photographers who came of age in the 1970s baffled Adams (and, to be fair, many others). He thought it was outrageous that the Museum of Modern Art gave William Eggleston a solo exhibition in 1976. Eggleston's generation certainly benefited from advances in film sensitivity, but younger photographers also composed in color with an ease unknown to Adams. The subjects they gravitated toward—suburban anomie, roadside trash—were equally foreign to him.

"I can get—for me—a far greater sense of 'color' through a well-planned and executed black-and-white image than I have ever achieved with color photography," he wrote in 1967. For Adams, who could translate sunlight's blinding spectrum into binary code perhaps more acutely than anyone before or since, there was an "infinite scale of values" in monochrome. Color was mere reality, the lumpy world given for everyone to look at, before artists began the difficult and honorable job of trying to perfect it in shades of gray.



RICHARD B. WOODWARD *is a New York City-based arts critic.*



Adams recognized that composing photographs in color is different from black and white and allowed that "some of us instinctively 'see' better in color." His approach sometimes changed according to his subject, ranging from almost monochromatic (left: Mono Lake, White Branches and Clouds, California, 1947) to realistic (top: Caladium Leaves, Foster Botanical Gardens, Honolulu, Hawaii, 1948) to expressionistic (above: Church, Sunset, Rear, Ranchos de Taos, New Mexico, c. 1948).

THE RESCUE OF HENRY CLAY

An all-but-forgotten portrait of the Great Compromiser restored after decades of neglect takes pride of place at the U.S. Capitol **BY FERGUS M. BORDEWICH**

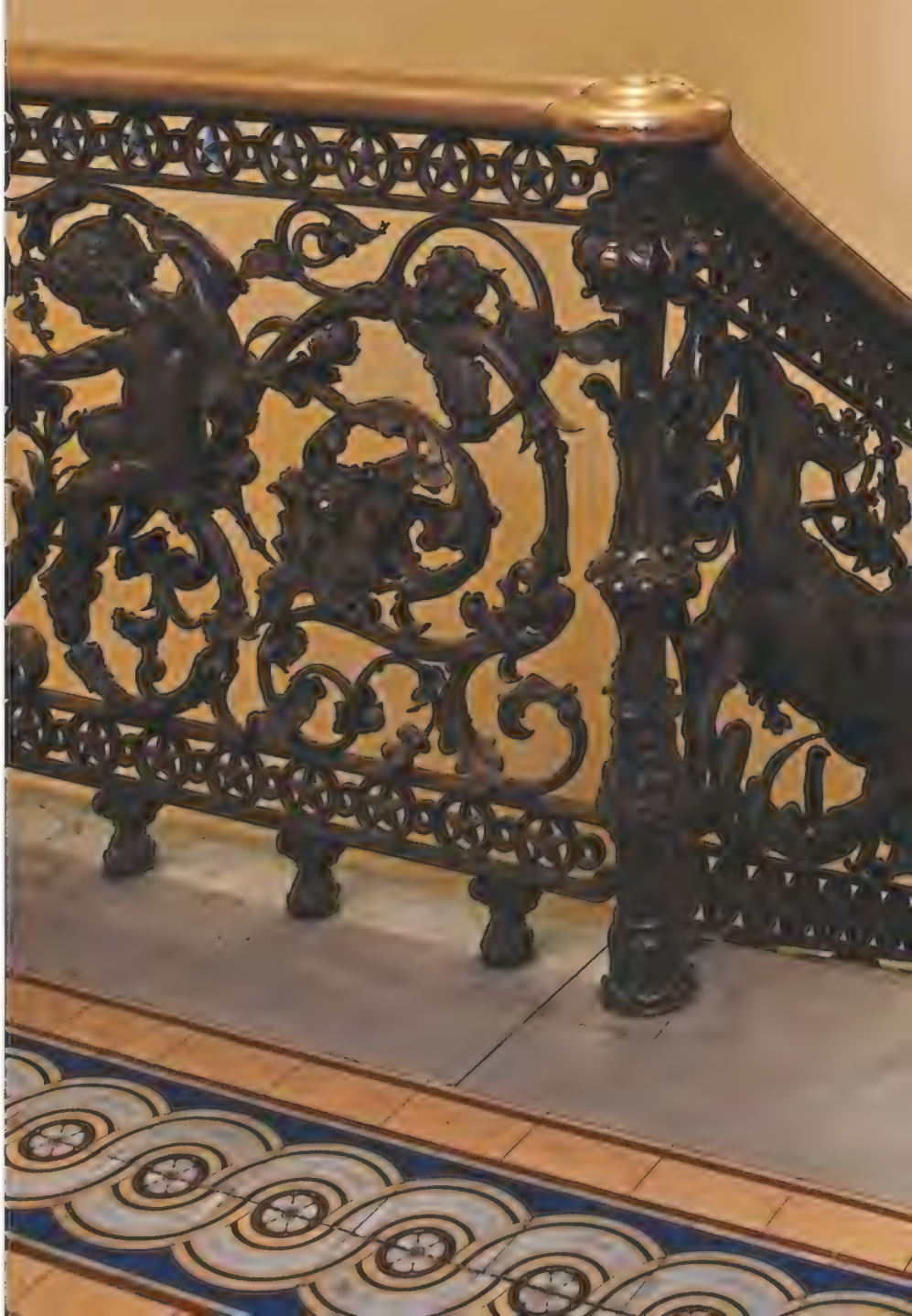
SIX BRAWNY MOVERS gingerly made their way out of the LBJ Room in the Senate wing of the U.S. Capitol this past May 24. In their gloved hands, they carried a monumental canvas sheathed in plastic, maneuvering the 100-pound, 11- by 7-foot painting toward a staircase leading from the opulent Brumidi Corridor. Finally, the movers painstakingly removed the packing, revealing a pantheon of larger-than-life senators from the years preceding the Civil War. At the painting's center, towering over his colleagues, stands Kentucky's Henry Clay, careworn and majestic, apparently declaiming with the silver-tongued oratory for which he was famous.

Completed nearly a century and a half ago by Phineas Staunton (1817-67), the painting, *Henry Clay in the U.S. Senate,* had been all but forgotten and left to molder in a basement in upstate New York. Now, after a 17-month restoration, it has found a home in one of the handsomest settings in the Capitol. "I never thought I'd see this day," says Diane Skvarla, the U.S. Senate curator. "We've not only rediscovered this painting, we've rediscovered its beauty." The portrait was officially unveiled on September 23. "Clay deserves this recognition, because he is eternally and deservedly associated with the art of legislative compromise," says Richard Allan Baker, former historian of the U.S. Senate.

Clay's career in Congress spanned nearly 40 years; he served Kentucky with distinction in both the House of Representatives and the Senate, with a four-year detour, beginning in 1825, as secretary of state under John Quincy Adams. He was also five times a contender for the presidency, and thrice a party nominee—in 1824, 1832 and 1844. A founder of the Whig Party, Clay was one of the first major politicians to advocate expansion of federal power. An enlarged role for the government, he believed, would promote the "safety, convenience, and prosperity" of the American people.

Clay's eloquence, wit and mellifluous voice were known to move listeners to tears. Spectators packed the Senate chamber to hear him. "As he set forth proposition after proposition with increasing energy and fire," journalist Oliver Dyer would recall, "his tall form would seem to grow taller and taller with every new statement, until it reached a supernatural height. . . . His eyes flashed and his hair waved wildly about his head; his long arms swept through the air; every lineament of his countenance spoke and glowed, until the beholder might imagine that he saw a great soul on fire."

Clay's political gifts were apparent from the outset. He was a charismatic member of the Kentucky legislature when first



appointed to a vacated Senate seat in 1806, at the age of 29—a year younger than the legal threshold of 30. (No one made an issue of it.) In 1811, he ran successfully for the House of Representatives, then regarded as the more important of the two bodies, and was elected speaker on the first day of the session—the only such instance in the nation's history. "The Founders considered the speaker a 'traffic cop,'" says Robert V. Remini, historian of the U.S. House of Representatives and author of *Henry Clay: Statesman for the Union*. "Clay made it the most powerful office after the president, controlling legislation, controlling the committees, and making it possible for that body to really get things done." His talent for creative compromise repeatedly drew the nation back from sectional crisis and possible dissolution. In 1820, Missouri's imminent admission to statehood threatened to destabilize the Union. Slavery lay at the crux of the matter. Although a slave owner himself, Clay opposed expansion of bondage on principle. ("I

Phineas Staunton paid homage to his subject in an 11- by 7-foot canvas (from left: the refurbished work, newly installed in the Capitol; Clay, c. 1850; Staunton's self-portrait, 1842).

consider slavery as a curse—a curse to the master, a wrong, a grievous wrong to the slave," he later declared.) Nonetheless, he defended slavery as both lawful and crucial to the Southern economy, dismissing advocates of immediate emancipation as "sentimentalists." He professed a belief in gradual emancipation and eventual return of freed slaves to Africa. But he believed in survival of the Union above all.

Missourians had made clear that they intended to enter the Union as a slave state. When the North resisted, the South began to speak of secession, even civil war. Clay brought all his powers of conciliation to bear. "He uses no threats or abuse—but is mild, humble, and persuasive—he begs, instructs, adjures, and beseeches us to have mercy on the people of Missouri," wrote New Hampshire Congressman William Plumer Jr. Those who resisted efforts to achieve compromise, however, experienced Clay's wrath as "continuous peals of thunder, interrupted by repeated flashes of lightning." With Massachusetts' Daniel Webster and South Carolina's John C. Calhoun, Clay crafted an agreement whereby Missouri would be admitted as a slave state balanced by a new free state, Maine. A line would be drawn across the Louisiana Purchase, west of Missouri: states to the north would be admitted as free; those to the south would permit slavery. For his achievement, Clay was praised by admirers in Congress and the press alike as "the great Pacificator" and "a second Washington."

It was during Clay's long Senate career, from 1831 to 1852 with a seven-year hiatus in the 1840s, that he left his deepest imprint. "He was one of the most effective senators in Amer-

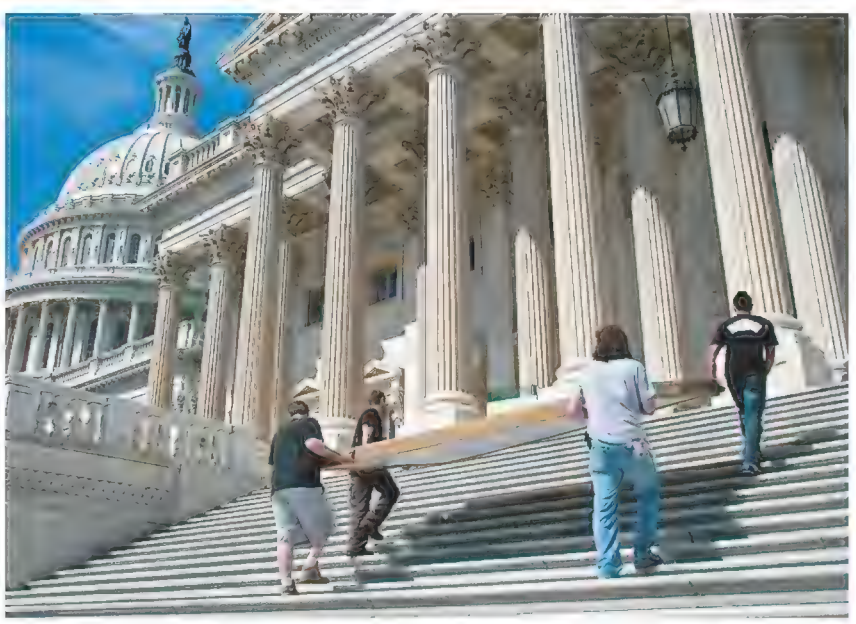
ican history," says Baker. "He had vision, intellect, personality—a rare combination." In 1833, Clay was instrumental in defusing confrontation between the federal government and South Carolina, which threatened to "nullify" federal laws of which it didn't approve.

Arguably, Clay's greatest moment on the legislative stage came in 1850, when Southern states seemed on the verge of seceding over California's admission as a free state, tipping the balance in the Senate against the South for the first time. Stooped with age and racked by the tuberculosis that would kill him within two years, the 72-year-old Clay delivered an epic speech that extended over two days. He urged a complex "scheme of accommodation" that would extract concessions from each side. He concluded with a passionate plea for the Union. "I am directly opposed to any purpose of secession, or separation," he declared. "Here I am within it, and here I mean to stand and die. The only alternative is war, and the death of liberty for all." He begged Northerners and Southerners alike "to pause—solemnly to pause—at the edge of the precipice, before the fearful and disastrous leap is taken into the yawning abyss below."

Consigned for decades to storage in a basement, the painting was badly damaged (clockwise from top left: as it appeared, in 1872; before restoration; newly refurbished; undergoing repair). "It was the most challenging painting we ever worked on," says conservator Peter Nelsen. "It kept me awake at night with anxiety."

Although Clay himself would collapse from exhaustion before the measures he advocated were enacted, he had created the framework for a visionary compromise. California would be admitted as a free state; to placate the South, the vast Utah and New Mexico territories would not be allowed to bar slavery (or to explicitly legalize it). The slave trade would be ended in Washington, D.C., as abolitionists desired; but a harsh new law would impose severe penalties on anyone daring to aid fugitive slaves, and make it easier for slave owners to recover their human property. "I believe from the bottom of my soul that this measure is the reunion of this Union," Clay asserted.

At the time, the compromise was widely hailed as a de-



The painting (above left: Capitol-bound this past May) was reunited with its frame (above right) following a 17-month restoration.

LE ROY HISTORICAL SOCIETY; U.S. SENATE COMMISSION ON ART (5); PP. 76-77 U.S. SENATE COMMISSION ON ART; P. 77 LIBRARY OF CONGRESS; PRIV

finitive settlement of the slavery question. Of course it was not. But it did stave off secession for another decade. "If Clay had been alive in 1860, there would have been no civil war," says Remini. "He would have come up with a detailed package of issues. He always seemed to know just the right thing to do. He understood that each side must gain something and lose something—that no one can get all the marbles."

ALTHOUGH PHINEAS STAUNTON, who had trained at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, in Philadelphia, had once met Clay, the painter would not create the senator's portrait until 1865, when he entered a competition to memorialize Clay announced by the State of Kentucky. Staunton depicted Clay in the midst of the Compromise of 1850 debate. Staunton failed to win by a 4-to-3 vote of the judges. (Rumor had it that Staunton's inclusion of Northern senators had dashed his success.)

The painting was shipped back to Staunton's hometown, Le Roy, New York, near Rochester. Meanwhile, Staunton had signed on as an illustrator with a fossil-collecting expedition to South America sponsored by the Smithsonian Institution. He succumbed to tropical fever in Ecuador in September 1867 at age 49.

Until 1901, *Henry Clay in the U.S. Senate* hung in an art conservatory in Le Roy, and then for decades in a local public school, where Clay served as a target for peashooters, spitballs and basketballs, which left a moonscape of dents and tears on the canvas. In the 1950s, the painting was consigned to the basement of the Le Roy Historical Society's warehouse, amid carriages, cast-iron stoves and a 1908 Cadillac. Then, in January 2006, Lynne Belluscio, the society's director, received a call from Amy Elizabeth Burton, an art historian in the office of the U.S. Senate curator. Burton had learned of the painting from a descendant of Staunton. Did the society possess a portrait showing Clay in the Senate?

Burton was soon on a plane to Le Roy. There she found the canvas, cracked, flaking and so filthy that many figures were unrecognizable. "It was covered with grime," recalls Burton. "It was torn, it had blobs on it. But Clay's face shone out with that fateful gaze of his. All I could think of was, 'Oh, my word, it's an art historian's dream come true!'" The painting's significance was immediately apparent: it is one of only a handful of works documenting the Old Senate Chamber, which, after expansion of the Capitol in 1859, was occupied by the Supreme Court until 1935. Would the Historical Society, Burton asked, ever consider parting with Staunton's work? "It took about a nanosecond," Belluscio recalls, "to say yes."

Restoration began in January 2008 and was completed this past May. "It was one of the largest paintings in the worst condition that I ever saw—maybe the worst," says Peter Nelsen, a senior conservator with Artex, a Landover, Maryland, restoration firm. "It looked as if it had been

For the Senate's Amy E. Burton, the serendipitous rediscovery of the painting was "an art historian's dream come true."

buried." Sections as small as one square inch had to be repaired, one at a time, 11,000 square inches in all. "It was the most challenging painting that we ever worked on," Nelsen adds. "It kept me awake at night with anxiety."

Gradually, figures began to emerge from the background: the legendary orator Daniel Webster; abolitionist William Henry Seward; blustering Thomas Hart Benton of Missouri; and Stephen A. Douglas of Illinois, the "Little Giant" who finalized the 1850 compromise after the senator from Kentucky collapsed. At the center stood Clay, his face transfigured by Staunton with an unearthly radiance.

What, one wonders, would Clay make of the heated exchanges that occur across the aisle in Congress today? "Our discourse pales with comparison to the early history of the country," says Senator Mitch McConnell, a lifelong admirer of his Kentucky predecessor. For 14 years, McConnell sat at Clay's Senate desk. (Kentucky's junior senator, Jim Bunning, currently occupies it.) "The compromises he wrought were life and death issues for the nation, at a time when not everyone was sure the nation would last. If you are going to be able to govern yourself, you have to learn to compromise. You can either get something, or get nothing; if you want to get something, you have to compromise."

Senator Charles E. Schumer of New York concurs. "Henry Clay's talent repeatedly drew us back from the brink of calamity," he says. "The hanging of Clay's painting couldn't come at a more symbolic time. I hope it will be a reminder to all of us in the Senate that bipartisan agreement can help push us toward becoming a more prosperous nation."

Frequent contributor **FERGUS M. BORDEWICH***'s most recent book is* Washington: The Making of the American Capital.

SUSANA RAAB

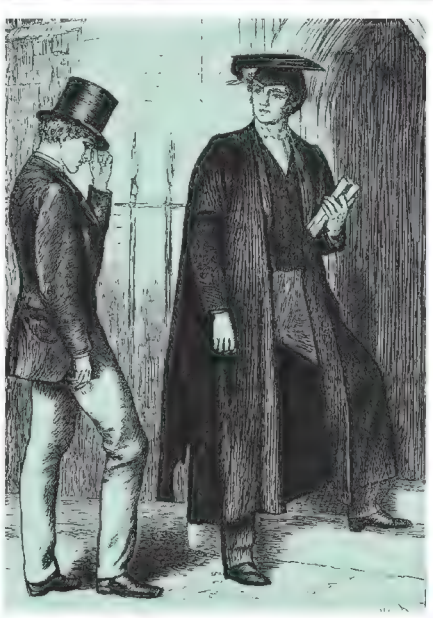
Historical Laughter

Those who don't have power tend to make fun of those who do. But what happens when power shifts? **BY LANCE MORROW**

LYTTON STRACHEY made up the business about Thomas Arnold having short legs. Arnold—headmaster of Rugby, father of Matthew Arnold, paragon of manly 19th-century Christian rectitude and one of the subjects of Strachey's *Eminent Victorians*—had perfectly normal legs.

But Strachey, for his own sly purposes, invented the indelible detail: "[Arnold's] outward appearance was the index of his inward character: everything about him denoted energy, earnestness and the best intentions. His legs, perhaps, were shorter than they should have been." (The Strachey touch is to be admired in the pseudo-diffident "perhaps" and "should." It added something to the joke that Strachey was a tall, dramatically ungainly man, built along the lines of a daddy longlegs.)

Other writers—Dickens, Wilde, Shaw, for example—assaulted the Victorian edifice without inflicting much permanent damage. But Strachey was an exquisitely destructive cartoonist, and his timing was as nice as his instinct for detail. *Eminent Victorians* appeared in the spring of 1918. After four years of the Great War and the slaughter of much of a generation of Europe's young men, hitherto imposing figures of the preceding age (Strachey's other subjects were Florence Nightingale, Gen. Charles



Lytton Strachey (top: c. 1913) picked his moment to make sport of Thomas Arnold (below left: in 1869, talking to a Rugby School student) and other Victorians. Jon Stewart (below right: in 2009) and other satirists must negotiate a transition at the White House.

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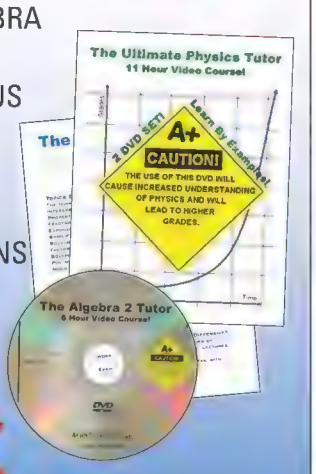
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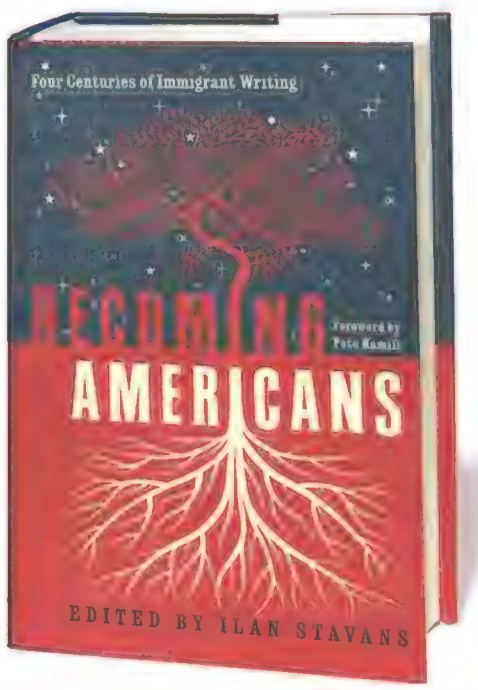

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"Chinese" Gordon and Cardinal Manning) seemed threadbare, exhausted. So, indeed, did the British Empire. Strachey's book became one of the 20th century's classic pieces of literary demolition, deft and deliciously unfair, an enactment of the late columnist Murray Kempton's crack about those who come down out of the hills after the battle is over to shoot the wounded.

The transition from one age to another brings a change in the lenses through which people view the history that is just past and their own place in the history that is now unfolding. The universe of those in power is mocked by those who are not in power—at least not yet—as, say, the television satirists Jon Stewart and Stephen Colbert mocked the administration of George W. Bush.

But the power changes hands. What then? What lens does the mind use in the new dispensation?

I think of such questions as the 21st century tries to sort itself out—economically, politically, environmentally—and to organize its perspectives as it hastens into a new age. We need to have a context to imagine ourselves. What is our narrative line?

Ecclesiastes says there is "a time to break down and a time to build up": the oldest dynamic. King Lear, the "old majesty," goes mad and expires. Goneril and Regan are consumed. Somewhere beyond the curtain of the fifth act lies a world more stable and sane, less petty and less murderous and less ignoble.

A PEDESTRIAN SUBTHEME is always at work at the same time. As Emerson said, "Every hero becomes a bore at last."

Napoleon acted out this bathos. On St. Helena, his young aide-de-camp, Gen. Gaspard Gourgaud, kept a journal:

October 21 [1815]: *I walk with the Emperor in the garden, and we discuss women. He maintains that a young man should not run after them. . . .*

November 5: *The Grand Marshal [Montholon] is angry because the Emperor told him he was nothing but a ninny. . . .*

January 14 [1817]: *Dinner, with trivial conversation on the superiority of stout over thin women. . . .*

DE LAURENTIIS / MOSFILM / THE KOBAL COLLECTION

January 15: *[He] looks up the names of the ladies of his court. He is moved. 'Ah! It was a fine empire. I had 83 million human beings under my government—more than half the population of Europe.' To hide his emotion, the Emperor sings.*

A disillusioning close-up—the debunker's friend—may excite hilarity at the expense of greatness. Poor Napoleon: in the 1970 film *Waterloo*, Rod Steiger played the emperor, giving an over-the-top performance in Steiger's smoldering sanpaku Actors Studio style. In the heat of the battle of Waterloo, Steiger's Napoleon, exasperated at Marshal Ney, yells: "Can't I leave the battlefield for a *minute*?!"

If a journal an aide kept on St. Helena is any guide, Emerson's axiom about heroes and bores includes Napoleon (portrayed by Rod Steiger in *Waterloo*).

In its prospering days before television, Henry Luce's *Time* magazine had an assortment of lenses for heroes and bores, and a prose style that could turn into a resonant travesty of the Homeric. Often the cover-story formula—ritualized by the magazine's less imaginative editors—called for a paragraph devoted to what the cover subject had for breakfast. A 1936 story on Republican presidential candidate Alf Landon of Kansas, for example, stated: "At 7:20 he was down to a breakfast of orange juice, fruit, scrambled eggs and kidneys, toast and coffee . . . husky, broad-shouldered Governor Landon . . . a wide smile crinkling his plain, friendly face. 'Top o' the mornin' to you all.'" Such close-up details (called "biopers," for "biography and personality," in queries that the editors in New York sent to correspondents in the field) were meant to give the reader some unexpected sense of what the person was like—and, equally important, to impress the reader with the magazine's intimate access to the powerful.

The Breakfast Technique had antecedents—from Plutarch and Suetonius up through Elbert Hubbard, the turn-of-the-20th-century writer and propagandist for can-do American inventors and tycoons, famous as the author of *A Message to Garcia*. Theodore

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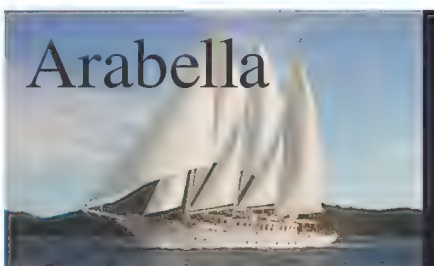

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Roosevelt excoriated "economic royalists"—then joked that his critics thought he "dined on a breakfast of grilled millionaire."

H. White, who was Luce's Chungking correspondent during World War II and, much later, the author of the *Making of the President* books, used the close-up-and-breakfast technique in his sketches of candidates and presidents; White went in for the organ tones of Big History. But by 1972 he had grown a little ashamed of the Inside Glimpse. He remembered how reporters, himself among them, swarmed in and out of George McGovern's hotel room after McGovern received the Democratic presidential nomination. "All of us are observing him, taking notes like mad, getting all the little details. Which I think I invented as a method of reporting and which I now sincerely regret," White would tell Timothy Crouse for Crouse's book *The Boys on the Bus*. "Who gives a f— if the guy had milk and Total for breakfast?"

Emerson's dictum about heroes becoming bores applies not just to people but to literary styles, hemlines, to almost all trends and novelties, even to big ideas. Marxism and Communism, heroic and hopeful to many in the West after the October Revolution, became something more sinister than a bore—the Stalinist horror. Almost concurrently, during the 1920s, prospering American business seemed a hero to many ("The business of America is business," Calvin Coolidge famously said), but came to seem to many a villainous fraud and betrayer after the Crash of

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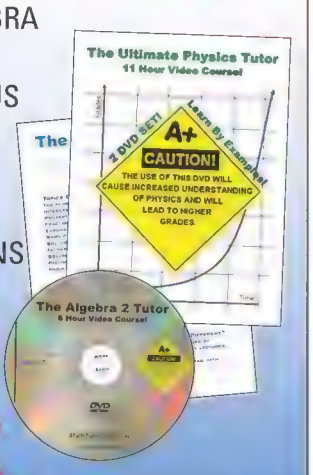
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1929. Herbert Hoover did not get far with his line, in November of 1929, that "any lack of confidence in the economic future or the basic strength of business in the United States is foolish." Franklin Roosevelt in the mid-'30s excoriated "economic royalists" or "Bourbons"—and then joked that his critics thought he "dined on a breakfast of grilled millionaire." ("I am an exceedingly mild-mannered person," he added, "a devotee of scrambled eggs.")

Then came yet another flip, a new lens. After Pearl Harbor, newly and urgently mobilized American business and industry became heroes again, churning out the immense quantities of guns, bombs, planes, ships, tanks and other materiel that were, in the end, a chief reason the Allies won World War II. It was in that context that General Motors President Charles Wilson, who became Eisenhower's secretary of defense, declared in 1953, "For years I thought that what was good for the country was good for General Motors, and vice versa." The statement would be uprooted from its postwar context and satirized as neo-Babbittry, a motto of the consumerist/corporate Age of Eisenhower.

The 1960s, which seemed chaotically heroic to many—an invigorating idealistic generational turning that followed the '50s, when the young were silent and the elders-in-power were senescent—came to seem, by the time of the Reagan administration and fitfully thereafter, oppressive, a collective demographic narcissism that had used up too much of the American oxygen for far too long.

EACH AGE INGESTS the previous one at the same time it rejects it. The new age builds upon the old. The work is not discontinuous, and the currents of transmission are complex.

Duff Cooper read *Eminent Victorians* in the trenches in France, while serving as a lieutenant of the Grenadier Guards. He rather liked the book, but at the same time found it a little too gorgeously easy.

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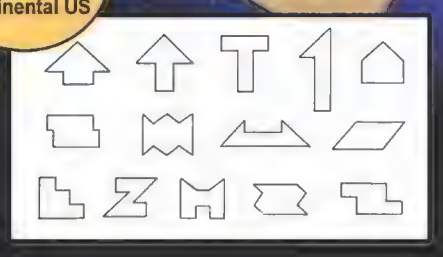
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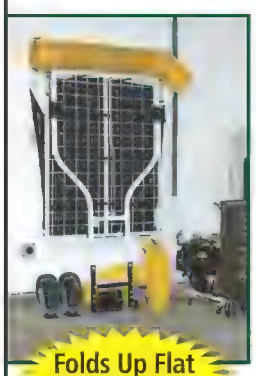

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H3OF2

We are used to thinking of history as a sequence, the periods segmented and distinctive. But an intensely globalized world grows intolerant of sequence. Its dilemmas are concurrent.

less you have some sympathy or affection for him," Cooper, the future diplomat, author and First Lord of the Admiralty, wrote to his wife-to-be, Lady Diana Manners. And Strachey, he wrote, seemed "to make no effort to understand [the Victorians] or to represent what they felt and what was their point of view, but simply to show how very funny their religious worries appear seen from a detached and irreligious standpoint. . . . You feel rather that he is out to sneer, that he is like an agile, quick-witted guttersnipe watching a Jubilee procession."

One age's iconoclast is another's guttersnipe. Colbert and Stewart savagely mocked the administration of George W. Bush as they pioneered an evolving form of subversive pseudo-journalism. Now that the George W. Bush context has vanished into the past and the power belongs to Barack Obama—presumably a more congenial figure to Colbert and Stewart—where do they take their Strachey-esque talent for demolition? They, too, are sorting through lenses to find the appropriate new optic. Contrary to Duff Cooper, it may be hard for them to be funny about a man for whom they have too much sympathy. When mock-

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ery dissolves into piety, the viewer's mind wanders, or heads for the door.

What seems different now is that global technologies intensify a historical Doppler effect—the pace of events seems to increase as we move into the future. We are accustomed to thinking of history as a sequence—the Victorian Age, for example, flowing briefly into the Edwardian, and then tumbling into the rapids of the Modern, the periods segmented and distinctive.

But in the early 21st century, an intensely globalized world grows intolerant of sequence. Its dilemmas become urgent and concurrent, and seem to Doppler up to the highest pitch. Hegelian thesis and antithesis talk over one another. Political call and response become simultaneous, which implies an end of dialogue. Think of the global financial crisis as coronary fibrillation: the electrical circuits of the world's financial heart, the intricately sequenced atria and ventricles of exchange, lose their rhythm; the heart goes haywire, it stops pumping.

Millions thought for a few days in October 1962, during the Cuban missile crisis, that the world might end. In the First Congregational Church in Washington, D.C., the radical journalist I. F. Stone told an audience of peace activists: "Six thousand years of human history is about to come to an end. Do not expect to be alive tomorrow." Nikita Khrushchev was thinking along those lines when he said wistfully, "Everything alive wants to live." And yet there may sometimes be a sort of vanity in the "all changed, changed utterly" note that W. B. Yeats sounded after the rebellion of Easter 1916 in Ireland.

Big history cannot get any bigger than the End of the World, which is the most dramatic and, in its way, the least imaginative of narrative lines. In any case, apocalypse in human experience has proven to be a state of mind with urgent but shifting coordinates in reality: what it certainly means is that we have crossed a borderline and headed into strange country. We have been doing that from the start. But history itself—so far—has not been easy to kill.

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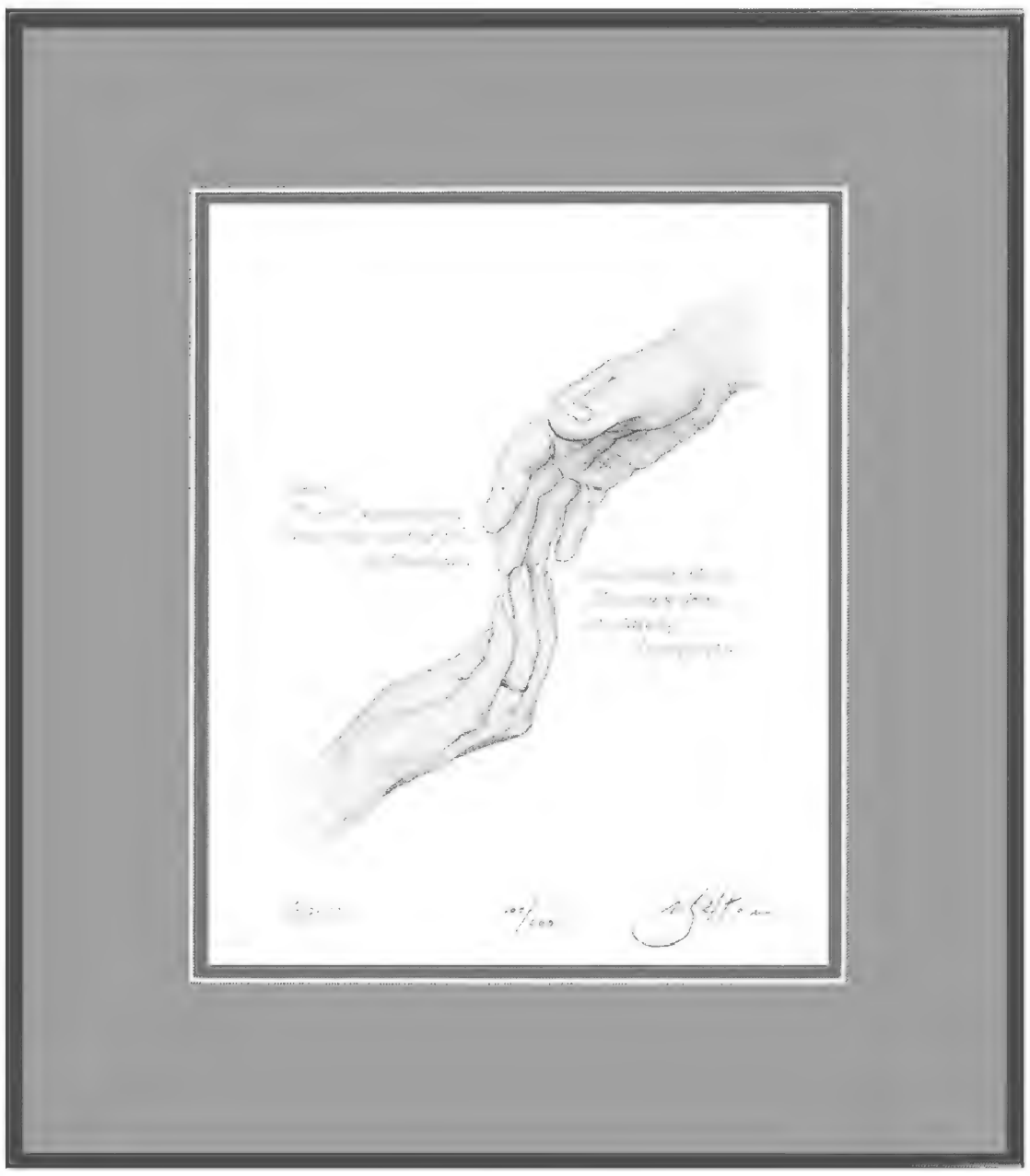

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CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

Gdansk (Danzig) should have at least acknowledged this fascinating city's rich bicultural heritage.

JOHN H. MEYER
WILMINGTON, NORTH CAROLINA

The following letter addresses issues raised in our April 2009 article, "Cook vs. Peary," which described the still unresolved debate about whether Frederick Cook or Robert Peary was the first to reach the North Pole.

POLAR LEGACIES

WHILE SOME OF Robert Peary's detractors—particularly those who support his adversary, Frederick Cook—have conjectured that Peary and his team never reached the North Pole, I, along with the retired U.S. Navy admirals of the Navigation Foundation, am convinced that Peary's data clearly demonstrate that he, Matthew Henson and their Inuit assistants did in fact attain the pole in 1909. Unfortunately, Peary alone was credited with this momentous achievement, and Henson, who by some accounts had reached the North Pole first, and of whom Commander Peary had said, "I cannot make it without him," was largely ignored by the press and virtually left out of the history books because of prevailing attitudes in the United States toward African-Americans.

Also left out of the history books was the fact that Peary and Henson both fathered sons with Inuit women, in 1906 in Northwest Greenland. On a number of occasions in the 1980s, I explored Arctic-Northwest Greenland, where I met and befriended Peary's and Henson's Inuit offspring. In 1987, with the help of polar Inuit families in Northwest Greenland and the U.S. secretary of defense, I was able to bring the then-80-year-old Inuit sons of Henson (Anaukaq) and Peary (Kali) to the United States on U.S. Air Force planes to meet with their American relatives for the first time and to place wreaths at their fathers' graves.

A year later, I requested and received an official order from the president of the United States to remove Matthew

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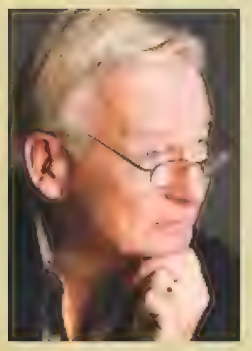
Chris Harris

For Chris Harris, the Smithsonian has been a source of great inspiration. From the time he was a young boy, he's clocked countless hours exploring its exhibits, attending events, and losing himself in the Smithsonian's extensive modern art collection.

These days the Smithsonian is touching his life in a different way. Through Chris' Smithsonian Charitable Gift Annuities, he receives income for life along with significant tax benefits. But mainly, Chris gets to give back to what he would consider to be a life-long friend.

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Peary's grandson Talilanguaq, the author and Henson's grandson Ussarkaq attend a North Pole centennial in Greenland.

Henson's remains from a common grave in New York City's Woodlawn Cemetery and to reinter his body in Arlington National Cemetery, adjacent to Rear Adm. Robert E. Peary's grave, with a fitting new monument and full military honors. This story was widely covered at the time.

During their visit to the United States, I promised Anaukaq and Kali that I would travel with members of their Greenlandic families to the North Pole on April 6, 2009, to commemorate the discovery by their fathers on that date in 1909. I knew that this would mean a great deal to both Anaukaq and Kali, proud Inuit hunters who never knew their fathers, and who have since died. I also believed that this project would be appreciated by Americans of all races and backgrounds who are proud of our country's historical accomplishments in exploration.

My plan was to travel with four members of the Afro-Eskimo Henson family (one granddaughter and three grandsons); three members of the Inuit Peary family (one granddaughter and two grandsons); and a great-grandson of Peary's Inuit guide Ootah to take a commemorative case to the North Pole on April 6, 2009, in celebration of the centennial of the North Pole discovery. This case contained an American flag, a Bible from Harvard's Memorial Church signed by the Rev. Peter J. Gomes (in memory of Henson, who said that he took his Bible to the pole as his "vade mecum"), Peary's book *The North Pole* (1910), Henson's *A*

COURTESY OF S. ALLEN COUNTER

Negro Explorer at the North Pole (1912), my *North Pole Legacy: Black, White and Eskimo* (1991), and Inuit cultural artifacts including polar bear claws and sealskin gloves worn by Anaukaq. The case also contained photographs of the launching of the USNS *Henson* and Henson's monument in Arlington National Cemetery, as well as numerous documents on the North Pole discovery and the visit of the Inuit descendants of Henson and Peary to the United States in 1987.

Near the time of our departure, however, I was informed that a landing at the North Pole in an Air Force C-130 on skis would not be possible because of ice conditions. I then took a Canadian aircraft and flew to Iqaluit (formerly Frobisher Bay), Canada, where I chartered a small plane to Qaanaaq, Greenland.

I am proud to say that on April 6, 2009, I stood with about 50 descendants of Matthew Henson, Robert Peary and Ootah in Qaanaaq, one of the northernmost inhabited settlements on earth, carrying a congratulatory letter from President Barack Obama. At the same time, by order of Vice Adm. Melvin G. Williams Jr., the USS *Annapolis*, a Los Angeles-class submarine, was delivering our commemorative case (which now resides at Harvard) to the precise North Pole.

While at the pole, *Annapolis* commander Michael Brunner read a statement regarding the importance of cooperation, understanding and harmony among people of all cultures, races, backgrounds and religions. The chief weapons officer of the *Annapolis* read a poem found in Henson's diary. And thus that anniversary was given its due.

I'm also pleased to report that in June 2009, in response to a petition I submitted to the U.S. Navy requesting an appropriate title and rank for Matthew Henson, who served on a naval field project for over 18 years, I was notified that Henson had been granted the title of command master chief in the U.S. Navy.

S. ALLEN COUNTER
DIRECTOR, THE HARVARD FOUNDATION

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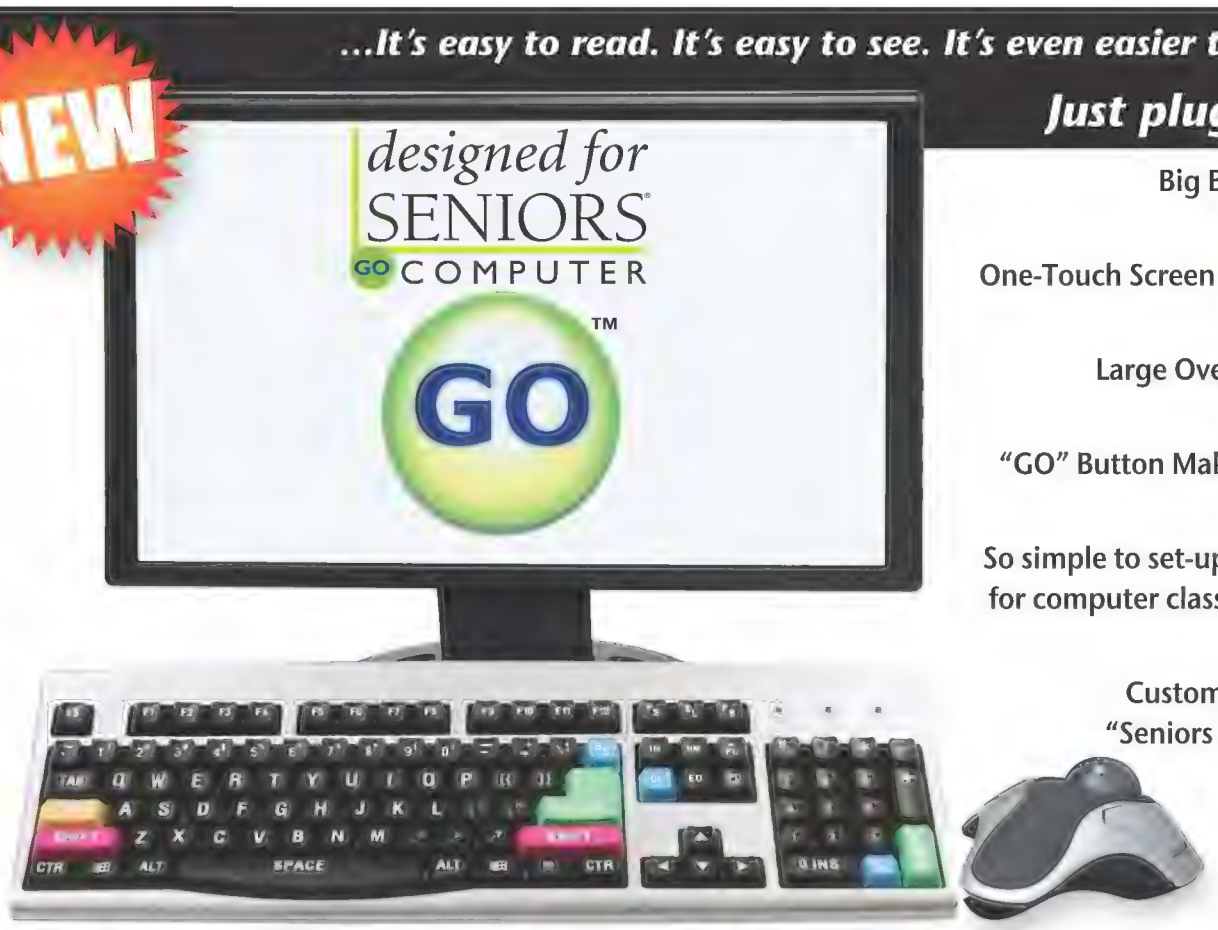

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The United States Rare Coin and Bullion Reserve Vault Facility today announces the final release of U.S. Gov't Issued Gold Coins previously held in The West Point Depository/U.S. Mint. For a limited time, U.S. citizens will have the opportunity to purchase these $5 Gov't Issued Gold Coins for the incredible "at-cost" price of only $124.00 per coin. An amazing price because these U.S. Gov't Issued Gold Coins are completely free of dealer markup. That's correct, our cost. This may be your final opportunity to buy U.S. Gov't Issued Gold Coins "at-cost." The Gold market, which recently skyrocketed past $1,000/oz., is predicted by experts to have the explosive upside potential of reaching up to $3,000/oz. in the future. **Due to extremely high Gold demand, availability of these special at-cost Gold Coins may vary based on current vault inventory.** The United States Rare Coin and Bullion Reserve will release these U.S. Gov't Issued Gold Coins "at-cost" on a first-come, first-serve basis. Orders that are not immediately received or reserved with the order center could be subject to cancellation and your checks returned uncashed. Good luck. We hope that everyone will have a chance to purchase this special U.S. Gov't Issued Gold "at-cost." Order your Gold immediately to avoid disappointment. Special arrangements can be made for Gold purchases over $50,000.

U.S. Gov't Issued American Eagle Gold Coins Coins enlarged to show de

Authorized by Congress: Public Law 99-185

By Executive Order of Congress Public Law 99-185, Americans can now buy new Government Issued Gold. Congressionally authorized United States Gold Coins provide American citizens with a way to add physical Gold to their portfolios. Gold American Eagles are made from solid Gold mined here in America, forged at the U.S. Mint at West Point, and produced with a U.S. Dollar denomination... making them Legal Tender United States Gold Coins. They are highly liquid, easily transportable, and, unlike paper assets, American Gold Eagles have a tangible value you can feel each time you hold your own Gold. Though no one, including The United States Rare Coin and Bullion Reserve, can guarantee a Gold Coin's future value will go up or down, numerous experts are predicting Gold to reach $3,000/oz. Now is the time to consider converting part of your paper assets into Gold. The United States Rare Coin and Bullion Reserve has a limited supply and urges you to make your vault reservations immediately. Call a Sr. Gold Specialist at 1-888-465-3915 to start your Gold portfolio and begin protecting your wealth today. If you've been waiting to move your money into Gold, the time is now.

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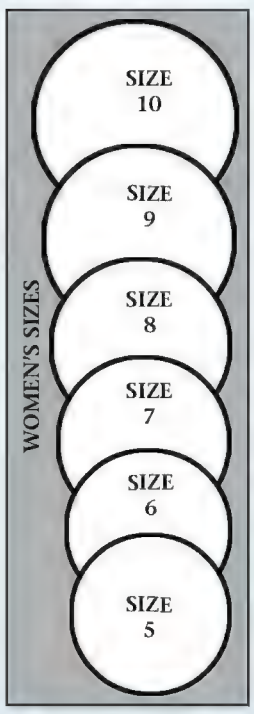

USING THE RING SIZE CHART

Place one of her rings on top of one of the circle diagrams. Her ring size is the circle that matches the inside diameter of the ring diagram. If her ring falls between sizes, order the next larger size.

Right now, black diamonds are the hottest precious stones in high-end jewelry. You see them everywhere, from the glitz and glamour of the French Riviera to the haute-couture fashion houses of London, Paris and Milan. And thanks to our priceless connections with the Belgium's top gem cutters, Stauer has found a way to make black diamonds even more attractive.

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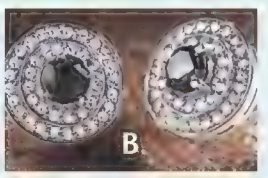

Our buying power saves you thousands. You can find similarly designed black diamond rings that are selling for $2,000, $3,000 and even $4,000 per carat! How is it possible that Stauer can offer our spectacular ***Black Diamond Ring*** for less than $200? It's simple, really. Since we buy literally millions of carats of precious gemstones every year, no one can touch our price.

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Home Sweet Homepage

Why surf the Web when you can live there? **BY BOB BRODY**

LAST MONTH OUR FAMILY made the big move. We migrated to the Internet. For many years, we rented an apartment in Queens, New York. But everyone we knew moved to online communities and our neighborhood changed.

It's a pretty long trip to the World Wide Web, about a three-day drive. Somewhere between Newark and Camden, my wife started pleading with me to turn back, saying it was too soon for our family to go digital. Would the Internet have enough room for all four of us? How safe was the water? Where would we store our linens? Luckily, our son talked his mother down off that particular ledge. He had visited friends who had already made the move. They had nice places, he told her, complete with backyards, and seemed quite happy. He also reminded her of what the real estate agent had told us about the Internet's good schools, low property taxes and charming downtown with cute boutiques. Besides, my company promised to pick up our relocation expenses.

Of course we'd seen this coming. The old bricks-and-mortar economic model no longer provided our family with a competitive advantage. Our apartment skewed too old, inadequate to serve our target audiences, particularly our kids, both teenagers and big believers in 24/7 interactivity. Oh, sure, we considered re-engineering the apartment: narrowing it to cut electrical and heating costs, getting rid of a bedroom to make us more nimble, and shifting one of our children to part-time status. But we quickly realized that such measures would merely be stopgaps against the inevitable seismic shift taking place the world over.

As we approached the Web's main portal, I caught sight of all the Microsoft and Apple logos and my heart swelled with hope for our future. Soon we passed through customs, got our vaccinations and our green cards. We've lived in cyberspace only 14 weeks so far, but already we just love it here. It's much more spacious than any of us expected, with his and hers blogs in the master bathroom, wikis in all the bedrooms, a microwave oven that picks up YouTube and hyperlinks for FreshDirect in the basement. There are even search engine optimization capabilities in the sunroom, and a private security patrol protects our streets against pop-up ads.

The only problem, we find, is the odor. No sense mincing words here: the Internet smells funny, somewhat like baby vomit. It might come from all the spam that comes through, or the occasional computer virus, or the tendency of the toilets to get backed up. We've complained to our real estate agent and he has promised to ask his IT guy to check it out. Oh, and sometimes our hard drive crashes, hurtling our family back to a hard-copy existence—until our superintendent reboots it. Still, the Internet seems to be the place to be, no matter how bad the smell or low the water pressure, so I guess we're here to stay.

Sure, I sometimes miss the actual physical universe, its tactility and all. But take my word for it: you get used to life's little intangibles. And our new home is already delivering optimal metrics. The number of unique monthly visitors we get is growing by leaps and bounds. We're drawing as many click-throughs as any family on the block. Even the advertising dollars have finally started trickling in.

Most important, the move to the Internet has brought our family closer together, though that may be because none of us has yet figured out how to navigate around here, and we have no other place to go.

BOB BRODY, *an executive and essayist, lives in New York City.*

ERIC PALMA